



# The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

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*"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His good purpose"*  
(Romans 8:28).

## **Romans 8:28-29?**

"Dad, have you been playing *Sim Safari* again?"  
"No really, girls, I saw a baboon running across the road on the way to the Rafiki Village this morning!" It's times like this that make us realize we aren't in Washington anymore, or even Madagascar for that matter! "Change" has been the way of life in 2003 for the Pederson family. We changed from being a family of five to being six with Olivia's arrival in March. Our girls changed from home school to public school, Julie changed from teaching home school to writing curriculum for the Rafiki preschools, and David changed from teaching BSF to attending graduate school and teaching preschool. We live in a new country and now call Jos, Nigeria, home. Thinking about all these changes, some painful and others joyful, we are constantly reminded of the sovereignty of God who works all things for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purposes (Romans 8:28). We are learning that He wants us to trust Him and be joyful while we walk where He calls. How have you responded to the changes in your life this past year? As you read through this letter, we hope you will reflect on how God has worked through the changes in your life to work out His good purposes for you.

Jos has a long history of missionaries, as evidenced by a strong Christian presence with churches scattered all over town. Still, with 11% of the population infected with HIV/AIDS, we can't help but believe that God has a timely purpose for Rafiki in Nigeria. Many people have come to believe in Christ's salvation, but belief has not necessarily changed harmful behaviors. One Nigerian pastor recently related it to Americans knowing for years that a diet of high fat burgers and fries is not healthy, but how many people continue to indulge? Knowing is only part of the solution; the hard part is actually turning from the harmful behaviors. A Rafiki Village provides an environment where children are loved and encouraged to develop behaviors that will honor God and serve as godly examples for Nigeria. Let

us give you an idea of the joy the Lord is giving us in our work with Rafiki in Jos.

## **Rafiki Children's Center School**

It's 8:30 A.M. and seven kindergarten students run for the school to greet their teacher with a big hug and smile. The day begins with students reciting the National pledge which they have memorized in English.

*"I pledge to Nigeria my country  
To be faithful, loyal and honest  
To serve Nigeria with all my strength  
To defend her unity  
And uphold her honor and glory  
So help me God."*

The words remind us to pray that these Rafiki children will grow up with a love for their country and desire to serve it whole-heartedly with behaviors that honor God.



Job, Apollos, Matthew, Chloe, Felix

At 9:00A.M., eleven three- and four-year-olds come for two hours of preschool. On days when it seems like all David is asked "tie shoe" and "look at me," he is willing to do so remembering that he is one of the few male influences in these children's lives. He has also learned a very important word that can change tears into a smile – "sorry." One day in class a child was corrected for not listening and had to sit out of an activity. The tears began to flow, but when the teacher shared a heartfelt "sorry" and the other children

chimed in, the tears were wiped away and all seemed to be well again.

### Vacation School

Another opportunity for training up these children is during Vacation School which is held during each of the three school breaks in April, June, and December. The theme this December was "Worship the King." Crafts, songs, and even games were designed to help the children learn how they can worship our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The last day of vacation school was Christmas Eve and the children presented a short play of the Christmas story for the twenty-four village staff and their families, speaking parts and songs all in English.

In appreciation to the staff for all their tireless efforts, each was given a live chicken to take home for Christmas day. It was quite a sight to see them walking home dangling the chicken at their side.



Angels singing "Glory to God"

We look forward to 2004 and more exciting changes at the village.

- More children: the goal is **sixty** children by May. This will fill six cottages. **Pray for wisdom to know the children God has prepared to live at Rafiki.**
- More mommas: One more is needed for cottage #6. **Pray for one that is committed for the long term to this challenging call.**
- More classes: It is exciting to think of our kindergarten class as the first Rafiki-Jos graduates. We have made application to open the primary school this August. **Pray for government approval of this application and excellence in operations of the school.**
- More finish work: God has provided a generous budget that will allow us a much

needed drainage system to prevent the heavy rains from tearing up the grounds, and plenty of landscaping to be done, including the school playground. **Pray for quality work and wise decisions.**

- More ROS: Me? You'll never know until you get an application and send it in! But before you do that, a word of warning, what you think you can't do is likely what you will end up doing. It's God's way of teaching you what He is able to do when you are dependent on Him.



Looking down on the village

Spending family time together enjoying Christmas and watching lots of movies was a wonderful way for us to end 2003 and begin 2004. Knowing your love, prayers and financial support are behind us gives us confidence to carry on the good work God has ordained for us to do, even through changes!



Anica, Olivia, Amelie, Lauren

To our God who never changes and who is changing us into the likeness of His Son we give all the glory! Amen.

*David & Julie  
Lauren, Anica, Amelie*

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