



The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

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Dear Family and Friends,

"*SANNU!* (You are welcome!)" were the first words we heard as we entered the country of Nigeria for the first time. Indeed, our ROS teammates and the Nigerians alike have warmly welcomed us. So, won't you join us as we take a look at our new home and the new work to which God has brought us?

The Arrival

Driving four hours from the Abuja airport to our home in Jos, we had a chance to view the countryside of Nigeria, albeit through travel-weary eyes. We couldn't help comparing it to Madagascar: lush green fields, different palm trees, simple homes. As Lauren noticed, they also have thatched roofs, but they thatch them in a circular pattern. Instead of the prevailing *zebu* cattle in Madagascar, goats are much more evident. The city of Jos is located in north central Nigeria in the Plateau State, and much like Tana, we are at a high elevation. However, the ascent to Jos winds its way through huge rounded boulders that protrude out of the grassy plains.

Our yard has familiar papaya and guava trees, but also avocado, passion fruit, and even pomegranate! There is a palm with numerous weaver bird nests hanging from its branches, reminiscent of an old Christmas tree with leftover ornaments. Our house is situated on a busy road directly across from Hillcrest School that our daughters now attend. Sixth grader, Lauren, is now in middle school and brought back enough homework on her first day to prove it.

She got to do the whole stack by candlelight, as the power in our home has been rather unpredictable. She is looking forward to learning to play the cello this year. The twins, Anica and Amelie, are in fourth grade and are

developing friendships with the other twin girls in the same class! Olivia is at home and becoming an expert at sitting up on her own.

The Reason

Toilets. Your own bed. Bathing regularly. Three meals a day. White faces. For most of us this is a rather commonplace list of things in our lives. But for the eleven orphans who have a new home at the *Rafiki Village*, these things might be novel, odd, or even frightening. In their short lives they have lost so much. We can only imagine what it must be like for them to adjust to their new home. Let us introduce you to a few of these precious children:

Jeremiah is an adorable eight-month-old with a sweet smile. He came undernourished and developmentally delayed. The social worker who helped place him recently visited and was thrilled to see the progress he has made. She confessed that the only reason they placed him with *Rafiki* is because they thought he would die anyway.



Paul, Vicky, and Dorcas

Just the day after his arrival, two-year-old Daniel was quietly, but comfortably perched in David's arms. His hard, distended belly gave testimony to his malnourished body. At the village he is receiving nutritional supplements and lots of love from his new Nigerian mommy, Rhoda.

Two orphaned brothers, Felix and Paul, were released into the care of *Rafiki* by their grandmother. When asked why she wanted to do this, she stated simply that when they were older she didn't want them to look at her and ask, "Why didn't you give me a chance?"

As we spent time at the village this week, it was fun to see the children jumping rope, playing with blocks, and even doing predictably preschool things like arguing over toys. The highlight for them, though, was when we got out Olivia's stroller. Four or five of them wanted to help push!



Play time

So, why an orphanage? And why Jos, Nigeria? As our ROS team leader, Melinda, shared with us during our orientation, "Jos has an 11% HIV positive population, and you have already met some of them." A staggering, sobering, and saddening reality—these are certain to be devastating statistics for the economy and social structure of Nigeria. But first and foremost, it means the loss of many loved ones in many families in this country. The Bible gives us a mandate to "look after orphans and widows in their distress." So that is what *Rafiki* is doing in a very practical way as they build orphanages to "stand in the gap" and offer hope and help through the love of Jesus Christ to those in need.

Our Part

The *Rafiki* Village will eventually house 180 children. All of the orphans will be schooled on site at the *Rafiki* Academy. David will be the headmaster of the school. He is going to be well occupied getting the school up and running. Melanie, one of our teammates, had done much of the groundwork toward getting the school registered with the Nigerian government. She had run into some resistance at the second level in the process from someone who had made some assumptions about *Rafiki*. We prayed that the Lord would make the way smooth. Here is how the Lord answered: David, Melinda, and Melanie went to this woman's office. Since she was not there, her superior met them, who "happened" to be the good friend of the man who donated his land to *Rafiki* for the village. He had met Melanie before, knew all about *Rafiki*, and was eager to help in any way. What a blessing that he had so recently been promoted to this position, was in the office on his day off, and was so encouraging! We are eager to be a part of this ministry. Our prayer is that you will be encouraged by this new work to which the Lord has brought us.

Would you pray for us in the following ways?

- For our family: good health, a quick adjustment, and love for our new home
- For the work: completion of the school registration process and preparation for the opening of the school by October 1
- For the *Rafiki* children: increased strength and health, and God's peace in their hearts in their new home and family

In His service,

*David & Julie
Lauren, Anica, Amelie*

David & Julie Pederson
Lauren, Anica, Amelie, and Olivia

Note our new address:

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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.