



The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

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"If I rise on the wings of dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast" (Psalm 139:10).

Christmas greetings from Uganda!

Since I have truly settled on the far side of the sea, I thought this Scripture reference was particularly apropos. The Lord does hold me fast in His right hand through storms, problems, health challenges, and homesickness. This time of year when families are gathering, nostalgia sometimes sets in—but then I hold a baby's hand during play time, see a shy girl at the girls' center blossom and volunteer to lead a prayer, witness the little local girls I've been helping grow stronger and healthier—and I know I am exactly where God wants me to be.

First Graduation

The Rafiki Girls' Center has completed its first three years in operation. In September 2003, eight intrepid girls braved the unknown and came through the gates of Rafiki to begin a new adventure in education. Africa is a continent of superstition and witch-craft. We are the first "whites" in our area. Local people spread rumors that we'd come to make slaves of the girls or sacrifice them and eat them. (Seriously!) So those first eight girls really had to trust God to come to our school. Susan Kabuuka and Pastor Fred Kabuuka of the Central Wakiso Baptist Church were instrumental in finding suitable candidates and encouraging the girls. Six of the eight girls finished the three years. We also graduated the five girls in the second class and are allowing them to complete their Rafiki studies three months early. *Please pray that each girl will stay close to the Lord and will follow the plans He has for her future.*



TWO NATIONAL "AUNTIES" HELP GRADUATES CUT THE GRADUATION CAKE.

Big Changes in 2007

The year 2007 is bringing big changes in the Rafiki education system. Instead of having a vocational school, Rafiki will offer local teenagers a classical Christian education that is certified by the African governments. This means that we will be offering the remaining girls who are still at our Rafiki Girls' Center an opportunity for a free education through secondary school, which will qualify them to enter a university if they can get a scholarship or sponsor. In 2008 we will be accepting eighteen students (both girls and boys) to come to the secondary school. The secondary school will be under the same auspices as the primary school that the Rafiki children attend. I am especially delighted that my job description will change a bit with the new plan. Starting in January 2007, I will teach the English at the secondary school and also the primary one English class. To be able to work closer with the Rafiki children has been one of my dreams and prayer requests. As you can see from the picture below, they are truly precious. *Please pray that all the students will prosper under the new educational plan and grow in their faith in the Lord.*



FOUR OF OUR RAFIKI CHILDREN EAT UGANDAN FOOD AT OUR THANKSGIVING PICNIC

A Profile of Prossy

Most people do not like change, especially teenagers. And so it has been with some of the girls. A few girls decided to drop out of the more intensive educational program that Rafiki is now offering, but most have chosen to stay. Prossy, sixteen years old, is in her fourth semester at Rafiki and is one of our younger students. She has the farthest walk, almost twelve miles a day. But many times she is one of the first girls to arrive. When I wake up at 5:30 A.M. and it is raining, I say a special prayer for Prossy since I know she'll soon be setting out to get to school on time. She lives with her father and four brothers and sisters. Her twenty-one-year-old brother, Deo, attends a local high school and treks with her in the mornings. She told me that Deo encourages her in her dream to be a nurse or a magistrate (lawyer). So she was delighted with the new changes that will give her an opportunity to graduate from an accredited secondary school. Learning about the attributes of God has been one of the most valuable things she's learned at the RGC. What she has learned about God is, "God is love. He loves me on my bad days and my good days, even when others turn away from me. God has taught me patience. If I am patient, I'll gain more than I can imagine." Yes, Prossy, that is so true. I, for one, am pleased that God will allow me to be a small part of Prossy's life over the next few years.

Please pray that the Lord will be with Prossy in all she does and that her faith never waivers. Also pray that her positive attitude toward the new changes in curriculum will influence the other girls.

Rafiki Uganda

This product was hand-crafted by girls at the Rafiki Uganda center.

Please pray for Prossy.



LOOK FOR PROSSY'S TAG WHEN YOU BUY UGANDAN PRODUCTS AT THE RAFIKI EXCHANGE.

Summer Furlough

ROS (Rafiki Overseas Staff) are returning to the States once every two years, now. My furlough is scheduled for 2007. I'll be returning to California with my pediatrician son, Eric, who has volunteered his time to be a MiniMissionary at the Kenya clinic in June. I'll be in California for the last week in June and in San Antonio, Texas for Enrichment Week the first week in July. I am putting together the rest of my schedule for July right now. If you would like to have a coffee for me and learn more about Rafiki's work first-hand or if your church would like for me to do a presentation, I'd be glad to include you in my schedule. You can e-mail me at jneal@africaonline.co.ug. I am currently experiencing quite a bit of trouble sending and receiving e-mail because of the irregular electricity situation. If your e-mail doesn't go through the first time, try again. I usually only go online a couple of times a week, but I will try to answer you within a week of getting your e-mail. If you don't hear from me, assume I haven't received the e-mail and try to send it again (and again, and again). Eventually, it will come through. Our satellite dish for the Rafiki Village should be operational within the next few weeks. I'm praying that it will solve our e-mail problems. My final prayer request is that many of you will want me to come and visit you and tell what Rafiki is doing in Uganda.

Serving our mighty Lord in Uganda,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JoAnn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "n".

JoAnn Neal

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