



# The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

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*“And from his fullness we all have received, grace upon grace”*  
(John 1:16).

Dear friends and family,

As we enter once again the Advent season, it is appropriate to recall that it is because of the fullness of God’s grace in sending His son, Jesus, to be Immanuel, God with us. God pours out this amazing grace on us in so many different ways. I would like to introduce you to two young ladies who are indeed recipients of His grace, as well as fill you in on how He has also blessed me bounteously.



Maggie Nyirenda has been at Rafiki now for nearly two years. She and her cousin/big sister, Grace, came together. Maggie is a wiry, little dynamo of a child and there is no need to guess how Maggie is feeling; it shows all over her face. Maggie has sort of been the baby of her cottage (at least

until recently) and all her brothers and sisters were always trying to take care of her or tell her what to do. So, last summer when the Marrons were leaving and I was going to have to be in charge again at least for a bit, Maggie asked me, “Madam Debbie, can I be the boss of you?” Thinking quickly that this could be a good thing, I replied, “Sure, Maggie.” That just made her day, or at least that one. I then would introduce her as the new Village Director since she was my boss. That, too, pleased her until one day she figured out that if she was the boss she would need a key. I had to do some tiptoeing around on that one. However, we all had many laughs thinking that if anything went wrong, we could just say it was Maggie’s doing. Because of the fullness of God’s grace, Maggie may well grow up to be a real boss someday. In the meantime, she is well fed (Boy, can that little girl put away the food.), clothed, educated, and growing in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. *Pray for our children at Rafiki to be content and appreciative of God’s grace.*



ANASTANZIA

Anastanzia Chirwa is one of the students in the younger class at the JSS. Anastanzia is a good student and a hard worker. She is used to being number one or two in her class and sometimes takes some teasing and even a little ridicule for that. Anastanzia has probably always found things easy but the challenge of a more rigorous curriculum has necessitated that she work a little harder to get those high grades. She has risen well to the challenge. When this term began, Anastanzia came to school really down one day. She shared with me that her mother had gone to her home village to care for her grandmother. That left Anastanzia home alone to care for a disabled father with several health concerns. She was apprehensive (a word that she had just learned in our vocabulary lesson) about leaving him home all day alone with no one to prepare his food or see that he was alright. We talked it over, and I gave her leeway to be gone when necessary, as long as she did her work (which she always does so faithfully). Then we prayed together for the strength she would need and for God’s hand of protection on her father. God has been stretching Anastanzia’s faith in Him while pouring out His grace in this situation. Anastanzia’s story is just one of many with our girls; they come to school despite the desperate conditions of their lives. *Pray that God will continue to supply all their needs so that they can finish their education and that their response will be like Anastanzia’s.*

God blessed me this fall with a visit from four of my Christian sisters from my BSF leadership circle, Karen Keister, Patty Malott, Ginger Pace, and Tona Debord. They have been among my staunchest supporters and prayer partners from the beginning of this great adventure God planned for me. It was a wonderful reunion and I was privileged to show them the work here at Rafiki Village Malawi. Even before they came, they responded graciously and generously to our wish list and involved so many other wonderful people in Amarillo, the Dallas area, and San Antonio. We were able to travel the countryside a bit and see God's beauty as well as the great needs of this wonderful country. We even had a little unexpected adventure when we had a flat tire which turned into a five-hour ordeal, which in turn became a blessing in disguise. Two stripped lug nuts, a broken chisel, constant prayer and text messaging, many songs sung with the children at the side of the road, and a fine Christian Malawian man who stayed with us until it was resolved were just a part of the picture. This resulted in six women (my teammate Susan Ray was with us also) and a little girl on the road at night in Malawi, a really big "no-no." Still singing as we went, we finally arrived at the safari lodge at 11:30 P.M. a little frazzled and road weary but safe and cared for by our Father. *Please pray for Frank, the kind gentleman God sent to help us, and his orphan ministry.*

You know in life you often come full circle, so another grace I have received is to return to teaching first grade (Standard One) here in Malawi. (For those of you who don't know, I started my career in first grade and taught it for fifteen consecutive years.) With the hole Bonnie Marron left needing to be filled, there was only me to fill it. I want to say that in His grace I have not lost my touch or the love of teaching young children. Sometimes the children have had to learn the hard way that Madame Debbie means what she says. However, they are really making excellent progress toward that and they love to learn. They are reading some from the Bible now, they can write good sentences, they know parts of speech and music terms in Italian.



STANDARD ONE CLASS

Pray that these children continue to prosper and that they come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord at an early age.

**As we look forward to another wonderful year, praise God with us for:**

- Donna Bland finally being here with us and a good check up for David Schaffer.
- The completion of many necessary long-term maintenance items.
- The blessings received in doing the hard things.
- The joy of the season celebrated everywhere by those who follow Christ.

In His love,

Debbie Needham

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