



The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

19001 Huebner Road #2 • San Antonio TX 78258-4038 • 210-244-2600

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Firsts in Mzuzu

Recently there have been many "firsts" in my life. This week I bought a truck "sight unseen;" negotiated with the owner for "new" used tires without seeing the original tires or their possible replacement; caught the biggest, ugliest bug I ever saw (the size of my hand in length and wider than my hand, in flight); and, last Sunday, Ester, one of the girls in the Rafiki Girls' Center, taught me how to cook with pumpkin leaves. Mmmmm! You never know what a week in Africa is going to bring. As Vicky Koch would say, "It's never boring here!" Firsts or no firsts, in all circumstances it is the Lord's faithfulness that I have come to know and appreciate each day.



Here is my new vehicle, a 1996 Toyota Hi-Lux. Thank you for your faithfulness to pray for a reliable car. "Reliable" translates to "common in Malawi, parts available, and people know how to fix them." I bought the truck sight unseen on the recommendation of a friend because the selection of vehicles is very slim in Mzuzu. Along the theme of firsts, I took my first five-hour bus ride to Lilongwe to pick up the truck. Then, I drove back to Mzuzu for the first time, thankful for the companionship of

a new Canadian friend named Antoinette, or Toni.

Toni was extremely helpful at each police checkpoint. She knows the local greetings in at least two languages. Her gracious greetings, combined with the generosity of the previous owner, got us out of a sticky situation with the police.

You see I'm not quite used to the etiquette/hand signals of passing through police barriers here in Malawi. After I realized the policeman was not asking me to stop, but was actually waving me through, I accidentally drove over his red cone in the middle of the road. He found this very disrespectful and waved me over, informing me that hitting the cone was an offense. While expressing my sincere regret, he requested my license to see if it matched the name painted on the side of the vehicle (yes, it's required to have your name on the car). Because the previous owner was kind enough to register the car for me and paint my name on the vehicle, we were able to move on without a violation. The cone part wasn't really an offense, but it made the policeman mad enough to try to find another reason to fine me. This was yet again a first, and also another example of God's faithful care and provision.

Another first is my first night watchman in Mzuzu, Mr. Isaac M'hango. I believe he is still laughing when he thinks of the evening I called him to my aid. I was afraid to come out of the house to give Mr. M'hango his evening tea because this huge bug was flying into and banging on the front door. Mr. M'hango stunned the insect after battling it with his umbrella. When it was

no longer a flying maniac, I asked Mr. M'hango to help me put the six legged, winged creature in a Tupperware so I could show it to others at school the next day. The look of surprise was priceless when he realized I didn't want it killed but wanted to take it with me. The next morning I asked Abel, the gardener, if he knew about our "catch." He just laughed, saying M'hango had told him all about the events of the night before.



MR. ISAAC M'HANGO

While teaching English to the third semester girls at the Rafiki Girls' Center, there have been many firsts. For the first time I understand the proper names for many English terms. The girls are learning about conjunctions and compound sentences. But the picture you see is from their Dramatic Presentation. For the first time the girls each had speaking parts in a presentation of Psalms 136 and Philippians, Chapter 2. And, for the first time, they were asked to invite guests to Rafiki for their recitation of the verses. The ROS (Rafiki Overseas Staff) who have been with these girls longer than I were impressed with the girls' newfound comfort to speak in front of an audience. The girls' excitement to have a friend come and see their school and woodcarvings was obvious. This was a first for them in many ways. It's a privilege to be able to make this kind of difference in the life of a young woman all in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Not a First

As you continue with me along this path, please know how grateful I am for your love and support. It was wonderful to see so many of you again last November. It was not a first to find so many, so supportive of all that God is doing through Rafiki. It was energizing and refreshing to see all of you and feel your love for me and my family during a very full and sometimes challenging time.



ESTER AND HER PARENTS

As you pray for us in Mzuzu, please keep the girls in the Rafiki Girls' Center and the creation of the Rafiki Village in your prayers. We have a wonderful team here and we are eager to include Becky Miller in May. Please pray for our growth and transitions.

With love in Christ,

Charmaine Fiumos
P.O. Box 1018
Mzuzu, Malawi
Africa

Email: cfiumos@yahoo.com
Phone: 265 1 330 774

All forms of communication are welcomed!!! To God be the Glory!

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