



The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

19001 Huebner Road #2 • San Antonio TX 78258-4040 • 210-244-2600 • www.rafiki-foundation.org

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"I will send down showers in season, there will be showers of blessing" (Ezekiel 34:26).

It is the rainy season in Uganda. The heavy showers combined with many hours of beautiful sunlight make fruit and vegetables plentiful. The lush hillsides resemble a patchwork quilt in countless shades of green. Rain showers here in Uganda are a blessing. The blessings that God has showered on us are almost too numerous to describe, but we will give you a sampling of some of them below.

Rafiki Girls' Center

Our twenty-one beautiful girls have been a wonderful blessing to us. They are enthusiastic, appreciative, joyful, creative girls. What is even more amazing is that they ALL love to weave! Every afternoon we do skill training on a variety of looms—even cardboard looms! We are producing beautiful products. Go to the Rafiki website (www.rafiki-foundation.org) to see some of the wonderful things our girls have made.

Each morning the center begins with devotions. The sincere, reverent, and grateful prayers from our girls have been a lesson in humility for us. As we join them in the singing of hymns, it is truly music to our souls. There is nothing quite like Africans singing, it is a bit of heaven on earth!

God has blessed us by allowing us to teach a variety of classes. Dave loves teaching art, music, and cooking. He really enjoys buying produce from local stands along the roadside. Our lunch time meals are getting more and more delicious. His music class is learning to play the recorder, and Dave is excited about the day when they can play hymns. As many of you know, Dave is an artist. As the third-semester girls learn to see things from an artist's viewpoint, he is seeing some budding talent emerge—more blessings to his soul!

Gretchen is teaching English III, computers, and sewing. Her first-semester girls have gone from being frustrated with their treadle sewing machines, to now finding joy in the wonderful things they can sew. Most of these girls know

no one with a sewing machine, so the privilege of learning this skill makes them truly grateful. The third-semester girls in English III put on a drama about sharing one's faith. What a blessing to see them "flesh out" their characters—AND what amazing talent emerged! This same third-term class is taking the computer course. Imagine their JOY in discovering the "magic" of computers when they have had no access to them before. None of them has power or water in their homes, so being trained on these modern machines is met with great enthusiasm. Gretchen feels so blessed to see the progress her girls are making.

In the afternoons, she is in charge of skill training in the weaving room. It has been an incredible blessing to see the girls designing and creating new products.

The girls weave on large looms, frame looms, cardboard looms, and back-strap looms.



Gretchen has enjoyed going to the local markets to buy fabric for the Girls' Center. She will admit that it has taken time to get into metrics. But she can now buy six meters of nice material and can barter for the price. This is quite a feat for a woman who used to have Dave ask for her where various items were in department stores in the U.S.A. (smile)

Rafiki Children's Center

Every third weekend, we are blessed beyond measure as we take seven or eight children to Sunday school at a local church. It is such fun

to hear them squeal, "Here comes Uncle Dave and Auntie Gretchen in the elephant car" (a perfect name for our big, old grey car).

You cannot imagine our JOY as we hear the children singing along with a CD of hymns we have in our car. AND you would be so proud to see them behave so well in church, especially since they are between one and five years old!

Personal Stuff

The rented home we had been living in did not work out, so we feel truly blessed to have been given the privilege of living back in the Rafiki Village until a suitable house is found. Please pray that we will be able to find a home soon so that we can have a place to rest and relax.

Dave has had a bit of a problem with parasites but has been blessed to get excellent medical care at the local clinics. Our fellow ROS have been such a help to us in bringing Dave to the clinics and hospital and in bringing food and even thermometers just when we needed them. Dave has recovered nicely, but has lost weight. He definitely needs to find a tailor to take his trousers in. They have a bit of a "gathered" look since his belt is now in the last hole.

Our quiet evenings at the Rafiki Village have been so restful for us. It is wonderful to hear the bullfrogs and crickets singing in harmony when nightfall comes at 7 P.M. The sunrises and sunsets are beautiful and we have really enjoyed hearing all the African birds sing their country melodies to us.

We are even more amazed at God's beautiful creation than we were in the States. Everything seems so much more vivid here. Dave has found though, that the local monkeys scatter quickly when they hear him play his mandolin. Could it be that he just hasn't found a song they like?

Yes, we have seen great poverty and it breaks our hearts. But, we have been so blessed by the Ugandan people who, even though they have nothing, have taught us lessons about kindness, generosity, friendliness, and a willingness to help anyone in need. We attended a fund raising for a local church building and were so blessed to see people who are living in tremendous poverty giving goats, chickens, fruit and vegetables and HARD earned money to help their church get built.

We have been blessed to find a wonderful church where we are being fed spiritually. Our Ugandan pastor was educated in the U.S.A., so he speaks English well. It has been great to meet people from various African tribes who are part of the family of God. This becomes very real to us on the Sundays we celebrate communion.

Thank you to those of you who have sent us packages. What a blessing to receive treasures from home. We truly appreciate those of you who have sent us e-mail. You cannot imagine how wonderful it is to see "mail" on our computer when we return home each afternoon. Please continue to communicate with us. We are very interested in hearing what you are doing.

Please pray:

- that we'll find a home soon
- that we will stay healthy and avoid malaria and parasites
- that we will be safe as we travel on the roads
- that we will make time for each other
- that we will be a blessing to our Rafiki girls and children, our fellow ROS, and our neighbors
- that we will remember to thank God for HIS SHOWERS of blessing!

We love you.



Dave and Gretchen

Dave and Gretchen Peterson
PO Box 28639
Kampala, Uganda
EAST AFRICA

Phone: 077 700 562

E-mail: davegretchenp@africaonline.ug.co

Be sure to check out the Rafiki website to:

- *read about other ROS and the villages they are serving*
- *to learn about all the new things that are happening in the Rafiki Foundation*
- *to see the beautiful products made by the Rafiki Girls' Centers*

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