



The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

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“...for He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6 NKJ).

If this newsletter read like a real newspaper, the front page headline would be the following; “Completed: Two months of first two-year term at Rafiki Village Kenya.” And what a two months they have been! The question that falls to me is “where should I begin?” Well, I’m at Rafiki Village Kenya as a teacher, so I think the best place to start would be with my students.

I’ve worked with a number of high school students both in and out of the classroom over the past eight years; and just from a teacher standpoint, the group of students that I am working with now, is probably the best group of individuals I’ve ever taught. There are eleven students in the class; four young men and seven young ladies, ranging from the ages of fifteen to about twenty. I am teaching Bible and science classes, so they get the pleasure of having me as teacher twice a day!



JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL BOYS: BRIAN, SAMMY, CURTIS, AND SELIM

The students love to sing, so selecting hymns for the start of Bible class can be quite a challenge for me. In an effort to appear unbiased in my choices, I am constantly trying to remember who picked hymns for the past couple of days, so as not to choose the same person over and over again. I’m not sure this method is as effective as I would like!

We have been studying Psalms this term, and so far I’ve completed Psalm 55 through 60 with the students. One student summed up our studies with this statement during our last oral test: “Problems happen but I’m learning to give thanks even for them, because it’s God’s will; in His time He’ll resolve the issue, and in the meantime He will keep me safe.” How important that faith was for all the students who walked back and forth every day to the school during the times of instability and fear. As many of you know there was a great deal of violence that plagued Kenya at the beginning of this year due to a mismanaged election process. These Psalms helped the students to put that situation into a faith perspective and pray confidently for God’s promises and expectantly for His resolution.

In science class, we have been studying geology; for all you non-science people, that is rocks, minerals, and soil. If you had been the proverbial fly on the wall during my class, you would have seen my students on a rock and mineral hunt and then learning how to identify the collected samples, experimenting with various types of soils, learning responsible mining techniques, and modeling various types of wind and wave erosion. The main thing here is that God is so much a part of science through creation, that in every area we study we can learn something more amazing about His creativity, His love for diversity in nature, His care for the world, and His provision for us.

One thing that I have learned (and am still trying to get a good handle on) is that I talk much too quickly and need to slow down. I think I’ve just gotten to the point with my students where I’ve convinced them that it is okay, and not disrespectful, to ask me to repeat myself or to say that they didn’t understand what I just asked. I now can tell when they didn’t understand my question—there is dead silence for about ten seconds and I get a roomful of blank stares, then a few clearing of the throats. That is my cue to rephrase and we try again.



PRIMARY TWO CLASS DURING TERM END RECITATIONS

My other set of students is the Primary Two (equivalent to second grade in the U.S.) grammar class. This class is a group of fourteen lively seven-year-olds. So far, we have learned about verbs versus nouns, creating a complete sentence with proper punctuation and capitalization, and about the use of pronouns. In addition, the students love being read to, so we have read *Stuart Little*, and are now in the middle of *James and the Giant Peach*. The best part for the students was when Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker (the mean aunts) get flattened when the peach rolls over them. They all gave a big cheer when I read that part; they really had gotten very offended by the way the aunts had treated James in the story. They were all very relieved that the mean aunts got what they deserved!

By now most of the students in the school know who I am, so whenever I'm going about the Village during off school hours, I'm followed by the (sometimes shrill) call of "Miss Shabouk! Miss Shabouk!" I have a feeling the children just like saying that name. Although it is a little embarrassing that all the children know my name, and I sometimes don't know theirs. But I am getting better. I know all the primary school age children and am now working on the PreK and Kindergarteners; it's a little slow going. I'm sure after GAMES week (when I'll be working with all the students) I'll be snapping those names out like it's nothing!



MY NEW PAL, DAVID (FOUR YEARS OLD)

I'm reminded by this that God knows all our names, because He has called each one of us at this Village to be here; ROS (Rafiki Overseas Staff), children, Rafiki Mothers, assistant mothers, MiniMissionaries, and so many others. It could have been other children or other individuals as ROS. But we are all here together because God called us to make up this community known as Rafiki Village Kenya. Perhaps you hear God calling your name, to be a part of this community too. As a MiniMissionary, you could spend two weeks or two months in Kenya serving God in a significant way in the lives of the children here. Perhaps you hear Him calling you to be a part of this community by being a sponsor for one, or more, of our many (now eighty) children. Perhaps God is asking you to share your medical knowledge with our surrounding community of Mwiki, during one of our quarterly medical clinics. Finding out more information would be a great first step. Check out the Rafiki website at www.rafiki-foundation.org. Who knows? Maybe one day you'll be in my shoes; completing your first two months and writing your first newsletter!

Called to Serve,

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