



# The Rafiki Foundation, Inc.

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*"Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. . . . Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers [children], even though they are strangers to you" (3 John 1:2, 5).*

Greetings, grace and peace to you, dear friend!!

I echo this prayer, that "your soul is getting along well." I thank you for your faithfulness in what you are doing for the vulnerable children in Africa, though they are "strangers" to you. We sincerely appreciate your love, support, prayers, and encouragement. Let me briefly catch you up since my last letter (July!).

**August:** Looking out of the window of the airplane I could see the natural beauty of the land. Lush, green vegetation embraced the deep blue ocean. Liberia, my soon-to-be new homeland. A few tears fell and I said a prayer of thanksgiving and supplication. As we made the approach, I could see the devastation of fourteen years of war. Every building had been damaged in some way and most were bombed out with only the outer structure remaining. We spent three days in Monrovia, the capital, and God clearly answered our prayers. We have a wonderful partnership with the Episcopal



Church, and they have given land for Rafiki to build the Village. There was even an article about this in the Liberian newspaper.

As we were leaving the Rafiki Village property, some children approached, and a sweet little girl asked me to "teeter" with her. They led me to what had been a see-saw/teeter-totter. I climbed on, straddled the pole (no seat), and off we went! Their giggles and laughter were bells in my ears. I count them as our first "Rafikies" in Liberia!



**September:** Christmas came exactly three months early for me this year, as my dad, Tom Stanberry, arrived in Ghana on September 25th! We are amazed at God's grace to allow us to serve together. He brought many Christmas presents from home. I

never thought I could be so excited over a box of Cheeze-its and good coffee! Dad teaches "cooking and nutrition" at the girls' center and then assists Wayne Bader with the myriad of Village repairs and projects. The picture is dad eating lunch at the center.



**October:** We began semester four and ten new students joined our center! They are full of excitement and enthusiasm! They are pictured below. *Pray God gives each of them a new love for Him.*



**Thank you for your prayers concerning my teaching. Share with me the joyous answers:**

- I genuinely enjoy teaching art! We are learning that creativity is a reflection of how God made them and how they can express that beauty in their own way.
- I am not teaching music! Instead, I am teaching business machines, which includes computers. This is proof that we serve an omniscient God!
- I love teaching English. This semester I am teaching English 3 and 4. Since we use the

Bible as our textbook and devote part of each lesson to learning more about Jesus, I am finding that God is giving me a deeper understanding of the girls and their lives. Recently the girls had a journaling assignment to write about a time when they needed Jesus. One of the girls raised her hand and replied, "But Madam, I need Him all the time!" Don't we all need reminding of that?

- The "business side" of the basket weaving is going very well. The Home Office in San Antonio ordered Christmas baskets and this gave us a wonderful opportunity to teach many "production related" lessons. You can see some of the beautiful baskets in the picture.



*Please continue to pray for Liberia.* The elections on October 11th were peaceful, and we are very thankful for your prayers! Since none of the twenty-two candidates for president obtained a majority, the presidential run-off election will be November 8th. The president will take office January 16th. *Pray that peace will continue in the process.* Liberia has more than eighteen ethnic groups and has a history of ethnic strife, one of the factors that led to the civil war. *Pray that these tensions will be eased and reconciliation will begin.*

*Please pray for the new government.* They have a huge task ahead of them. The entire country is without electricity, running water, and garbage/ sewage collection. More than 100,000 ex-combatants, the majority of them children, need to be reintegrated into society. Hundreds of thousands of Liberian refugees are living in relief camps. The need is great; our God is greater. *Please continue to lift up the team going Liberia, Ed and Donna Bland and myself. We are tentatively planning on moving to Monrovia the end of January.*

This picture illustrates what my words cannot. Liberia will be rebuilt. God will restore His Name in that country. He is faithful. You can see businesses and housing in this photo.



I will end with a synopsis of an article entitled, "A ONE-WHEELED SEMI RULES A BATTERED CAPITAL'S ROADS," by Lydia Polgreen; 17 October 2005, The New York Times Copyright 2005.

They call them "war cars" because after fourteen years of civil there are not many real cars available in Liberia. Instead, the wheelbarrow is providing the foundation for commerce and transport. Merchants line the street with their wheelbarrows full of fruit, soap, pencils, and bread.

*"It is a simple technology almost as old as the wheel. But in a war-scarred city with no electricity or running water, where gasoline is sold from gallon-size mayonnaise jars stacked next to broken fuel pumps, the wheelbarrow is the cornerstone of the vast, informal economy."*

*"The wheelbarrow has been so important to Liberia's development that it holds a prominent place in its seal, along with a shovel and a palm tree. A ship looms in the background, under the words 'The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here,' a reference to the founding of this nation by freed slaves from the United States."*

So, as you are using your wheelbarrows to rake leaves this fall, shovel snow this winter, transplant flowers next spring, say a prayer for Liberia, remembering your ties to her through the "Love of Liberty." Pray that Liberians will truly understand Christ's freedom, and be able to **"look intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abide by it"** (James 1:25a).

*Melissa Wudeman*

God bless you and keep you,  
Love and Service in Christ Always,

Melissa

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