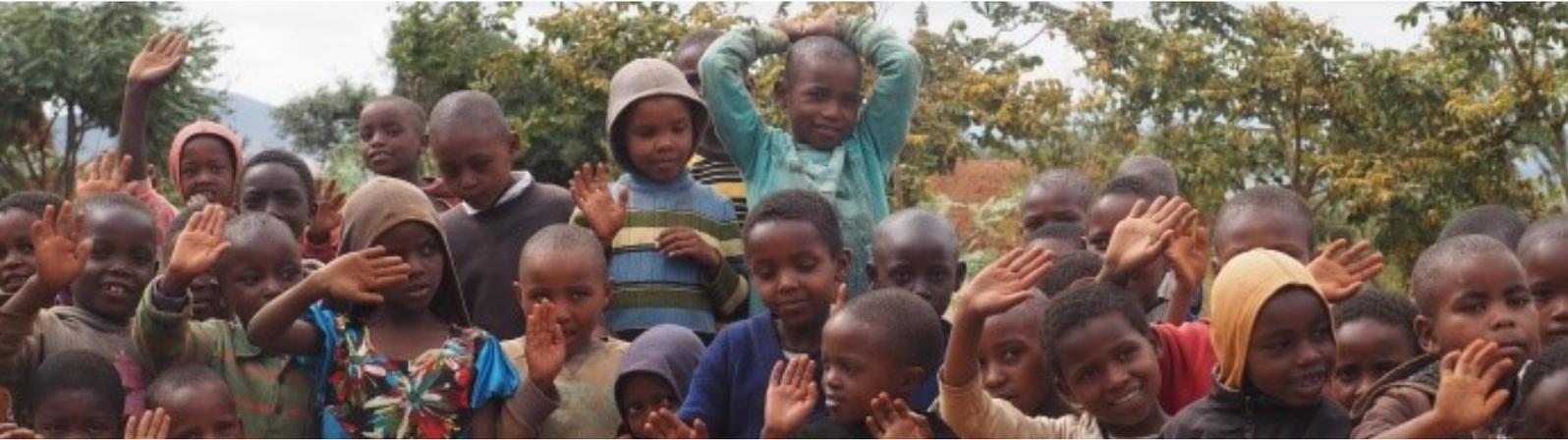


RAFIKI NEWS

SPRING 2021



RAFIKI VILLAGE PROJECT HOSTS VIRTUAL COMMUNITY MEETING

Rafiki Village Project hosts an annual community meeting in Dumbeta Ward. Teachers, parents, school board members, school administrators, health care providers, local politicians and interested members of the community all come together to share successes and challenges from the previous year and to hammer out priorities for the coming year. The end result is a detailed plan that determines the Rafiki Village Project's annual budget.

Until 2020, David and Laura have represented the organization at the meeting but Covid-19 put travel to Tanzania on hold. Consequently, the decision was made to hold a virtual meeting. One of the advantages was that our whole board was able to meet our Tanzanian friends and partners.

Our good friends at Karimu International Help Foundation generously supplied the expertise and equipment that enabled us to overcome the significant technical challenges involved in this undertaking. We could not have done it without their help.

The meeting was held on December 6th in a classroom at Dumbeta Secondary School, using electricity supplied by the recently installed solar panels. The meeting was a big success and when it was over a festive meal was enjoyed by all.

In this issue:

Virtual Community Meeting
Dumbeta Primary School's
New Classrooms
Water Project Updates

Volunteer Teachers
Tanzania's New President
Shukuru Cottage
Facebook Fundraisers
Help Spread the Word



DUMBETA PRIMARY SCHOOL TO HAVE NEW CLASSROOMS



Dumbeta Primary School is Dumbeta Ward's largest and oldest school. With 698 students and only seven classrooms it is also the Ward's most overcrowded. Three of the school's seven classroom buildings collapsed during a torrential rain storm in 2017. Thankfully, the buildings were unoccupied at the time but the loss of the classrooms has resulted in class sizes of greater than 100 pupils.



With so many young bodies squeezed together it is a wonder that any learning can occur. The packed classrooms have certainly made teaching challenging and student performance has suffered. When the community met to discuss possible projects for 2021, the highest priority was given to construction of a new classroom building at Dumbeta Primary School.



As the head teacher, Dominic Niima, has pointed out, "The new classrooms will be very helpful because they will reduce the number of students in a single class, making the teaching process easier and improving student performance."

Ground was broken in March and as of today the project is more than half completed. Soon the students will be sitting in new, freshly painted classrooms. Now that the classrooms are almost completed our next challenge will be raising the funds needed to purchase desks for the students and teachers.





WATER PROJECT PUTS A SMILE ON FACES OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Prior to this year Lamay Primary School students and surrounding community members had to carry water from a public water source almost three miles away. That trip is no longer necessary, thanks to a new water line that connects to a public water supply. On-site water benefits the school and community in multiple ways. School children no longer have to spend precious learning time transporting water from a distant source. Having water readily available means that students can wash their hands throughout the day, which limits the spread of disease. Hot lunch can be prepared for students on a daily basis, reducing hunger and facilitating learning. Families now have plenty of water for cooking, bathing, hygiene and for their animals, thus improving lives and freeing up precious time.

The water project at Lamay was modeled after a similar 2016 project that continues to bring running water to Gijega Primary School and the surrounding community. Both projects utilize a low-tech gravity-fed system that does not require electricity or pumps. The Rafiki Village Project funded both projects and the community supplied the labor to dig miles-long trenches to bury the waterline. Water taps were installed at the schools and at several nearby locations.



VOLUNTEER TEACHERS MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE

Teacher:student ratios in Tanzania give Westerners pause. At Gichbord Primary School they run as high as 1:103, and 1:109 at Dumbeta Primary School. How on earth do the schools manage? It turns out that the Rafiki Village Project's stipends play a key role.

Since 2019, the RVP has sent a quarterly stipend of \$250 to each of Dumbeta Ward's five schools and the community is empowered to decide how the money will be spent. We've seen over and over that \$5000/year goes a very long way. Sometimes it goes towards equipment and supplies, or seeds for the school gardens. Lots of it was spent on printing, back before solar electricity and a photocopier were installed at Dumbeta Secondary School. But lately the funds have been used largely to compensate volunteer teachers who help staff the schools and educate the children.



Josephine Matamba, Ward Education Officer

Josephina Matamba, Dumbeta Ward's Education Officer, explains, "Most of the primary school teachers have certificates. The volunteers are also certificate holders. Most of them are fresh from college and waiting for employment. Most of them are from Dumbeta Ward and some are living with their parents or the permanent teachers. They are hired by the school committee; we do interviews and offer them 70,000 shillings/month."

That's about \$31.00 per volunteer teacher. Less than it costs to go out to dinner once in Portland.

"To be honest, the allowance they receive is very small to cover their basic needs. But due to the hardships of life they have to accept it, and sometimes the permanent teachers contribute small amounts of money from their salaries to give to the volunteers. Volunteers have helped us beyond imagination. Volunteers are being given subjects to teach, like the permanent teachers. Before, some of the subjects were not being taught because of the insufficient number of teachers. I had to find a way to make sure that these students get to learn!"

Josephina's dedication and ingenuity are a gift to the Ward, as are the hard-working volunteers. Together with the Ward's teachers, they are helping the children to learn, succeed, and thrive. **Help us to support the volunteer teachers by giving generously to our School Stipends program!**

TANZANIA HAS A NEW PRESIDENT

Samia Suluhu Hassan has become the sixth president of Tanzania following the sudden death of President John Magufuli on March 17th. President Suluhu, or as she is affectionately called, Mama Samia, is Tanzania's first female president, and one of only two female heads of state in Africa.

President Suluhu was born on the beautiful island of Zanzibar, an autonomous region of Tanzania off the coast of the mainland. She served as Magufuli's Vice President since 2015. She has served in public office since 2000 and is known to be quite different from Magufuli in her temperament and leadership style.



The new president has signaled that she intends to take a radically different approach to the COVID-19 pandemic. In a nationally broadcasted speech on April 6th she said, "Covid-19 is not something we should be quiet about or refuse flatly or accept without doing a scientific examination...We will do medical research which will tell us the scope of the problem and advise us about what the world is recommending as well as our own expertise". This is a dramatic change from her predecessor, who was one of Africa's leading Covid-19 skeptics. The late President Magufuli famously claimed that Tanzania could rid itself of COVID-19 through three days of national prayer. He dismissed scientific approaches to preventing and treating the disease. He discouraged the use of face masks and social distancing and instead promoted prayer, physical fitness and herbal remedies. Magufuli's government was known to have fired, and even arrested, officials who challenged his approach to the pandemic.



FACEBOOK BIRTHDAY FUNDRAISERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

For your next birthday we hope you will consider helping the Rafiki Village Project by creating a Facebook Birthday Fundraiser. In this time of Covid we have had to think of new ways to support the work we do to help the community of Dumbeta Ward, in Tanzania. In the past year, several of our friends have generously created Facebook birthday fundraisers for us. We have been pleasantly surprised to learn that these appeals are effective. They have helped carry us through the pandemic and continue our projects uninterrupted.

Creating a Facebook Birthday Fundraiser is easy. This [YouTube video](#) will walk you through it. Even if you have done this before I suggest watching it because it has some good suggestions. I am also available to help. I can send you some photos or a blurb about our latest project, which you can include in your fundraiser.

Please send me an email at davnew2@earthlink.net if you can commit to doing this. We will send you a reminder a few weeks before your birthday. And if you send me your snail mail address we will also send you a real, honest-to-goodness, birthday present in appreciation!

Thank you so much for your continued support. Together we can make a real difference in the lives of the citizens of Dumbeta Ward.



[DONATE NOW](#)





INTRODUCING SHUKURU COTTAGE

Covid-19 has forced many of us to cancel our travel and vacation plans. We have been stuck inside our homes for way too long, looking at the same walls, and with nowhere to go. A few days spent rejuvenating in a scenic and peaceful place is just what we recommend if you're looking to combat pandemic fatigue. We hope that you will come spend a few days relaxing in Shukuru Cottage.

SHUKURU: 'GRATITUDE'



Shukuru means gratitude in Swahili. David and Laura named their Mt. Hood cabin Shukuru Cottage because of the gratitude they feel for the abundant blessings in their lives. David and Laura are also grateful to you, our donors. Without your generosity the Rafiki Village Project would not be possible. As a thank you for your generosity, they are making Shukuru Cottage available to you.



Shukuru Cottage is in a beautiful forest setting near the village of Rhododendron, just 45 miles east of Portland. It is surrounded by towering conifers and mountain streams. During the day, hike the many nearby trails, downhill or cross-country ski spectacular Mt. Hood, fly-fish for steelhead in pristine mountain streams, swim or kayak in nearby lakes, play a round of golf at Three Nines Golf Course, take the family to Mt. Hood Adventure Park and brave the infamous Alpine Slide, or simply relax and do nothing in a beautiful setting. In the evening, eat dinner out on the deck, relax with a glass of wine, read that novel you've been meaning to get to, or play a game by the fire. At night, fall into a deep and restful sleep listening to the hypnotic sounds of Zigzag and Still Creeks.



At the same time you are enjoying your stay know that 100% of your donation will go to supporting the work of the Rafiki Village Project. Remember: Rafiki means friend. For more information about Shukuru Cottage or to reserve it please visit our webpage here: [Shukuru Cottage](#)

SHUKURU COTTAGE

HELP US SPREAD THE WORD



The Rafiki Village Project needs your help. The success of our work depends on your help to spread the word. The one thing you can do that will help more than anything else is to forward this newsletter to your friends, family, coworkers and neighbors with a short note asking them to read it and to consider donating. Thank you for this act of caring. It will make a difference in people's lives.

