



## Marafiki Year-end Summary 2025

Greetings friends!

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas celebrating the birth of our Lord!

This past year, my work in Kenya was another rich experience of serving in Marafiki's partner communities. In addition to following up on Marafiki's education work in Muliro village, I also had the blessing of co-leading a group of medical professionals. This group included: six 2025 graduates (five nursing graduates and one biology/pre-med graduate) from George Fox University, and one student with one semester left of her nursing program. They were joined by seven medical personnel, including one GFU nursing graduate, now a licensed nurse.



The 2025 medical team at our preparation retreat.

I have taken many teams to Kenya in the last 10 years, both education and medical, and this team was one of the best I have ever worked with! They were ready to serve wherever they could, and they served with grace, compassion, and humility. I have never seen a team jell together so quickly during our preparations and on site in Kenya. What a blessing!

Two specific example stand out where the team

members exhibited the biblical concepts of loving one's neighbor. Both cases involved two young men, both criminals of some sort, and both injured as a result of their criminal activities. And yet, our team attended to the care of these young men with humility and compassion, and without prejudice.

The first example was a burn victim who came to Lugulu hospital right before our team arrived. He had been taken to a public hospital in another town, but was refused care. He was brought to Lugulu with the hopes that someone there would have compassion on him. The story we first heard was that he had been pulled off a motorcycle and then set on fire. That all was true, but he had actually stolen the motorcycle and it was mob justice that pulled him off of the stolen vehicle and set him on fire. Our "students" asked what could be done, and then set to work cleaning and dressing his wounds, providing him great relief from his pain. The students then kept checking on him, and before we left Lugulu hospital, the team gave his family instructions for further care once he got home. Before we left, the young man weakly smiled and even thanked several of our team members.



Tending to the burn victim.

The second example was in Samburu where we held a medical camp as an extension of the Friends clinic in the region. This young man was also a criminal, having been in a gruesome knife fight. His companions bypassed many clinics before they arrived at this very rural clinic for him to be treated. Once again, our team worked to tend to his wounds and provide the necessary care so he could be released to leave the area.



Tending to the man insured in a fight.

Both of these example are just some ways in which we serve within the communities. We come to work alongside the Kenyan medical professionals already working in the area, while demonstrating the love of Jesus with speech, actions, humility, and our hands and feet.

### Musembe Primary School

Once again our medical team had the opportunity to provide health assessments to the children of Musembe Primary school. However, as we reached the school the morning on the designated day, the school had prepared a special event before we could begin our work.

Unbeknownst to me, the school planned to officially dedicate the new playground and name it after me. And in Kenyan culture, it was a grand celebration, complete with music, speeches, tree planting, and photos. To say I was overwhelmed is an understatement. For those who know me, I am an introvert who tries to avoid attention or being in

the limelight of any kind. But that was not happening on that day. You see, when I first visited Musembe school in 2012, a new playing field was on my list of projects to help the school attain someday. After the completion of many needed classrooms and other higher priority projects over the years, the main work on the field finally started in 2023 and was finished at the end of 2024. The field had to be leveled, drainage put in, and then more leveling in order to reclaim the swampy land for a proper playing field that all could enjoy. However, to be clear, this has not been just my work; it has been the support of many of you reading this letter who have believed in Marafiki's work in Muliro Village over the years. I give many thanks to those who have prayed and given financial resources to not only this project, but many projects throughout the years. It is not a cliché when I say: All glory to God for what he has done in this community over the years.



The unveiling of the new field.



One of many photo ops with principal Moses Okanga

And yes, we finally were able to provide health assessments to the students during the remainder of the day. We attempted to see every student in the school beginning with the younger children and ending with the grade 9 students. This is another ministry where we have observed many positive changes over the years as students and teachers alike employ better health practices, which then spill into the surrounding community.



Meeting the students for assessments.



The classroom turned into a health assessment room.

### Ministry to Widows

Since 2015, Marafiki has been ministering to the widows of Muliro Village through the distribution of annual food baskets, along with health care assessments. This ministry is close to my heart as we are living out Christ's command to take care of the widows and orphans, specifically in this rural region of Kenya.

Once again, Rose Muhangi and her women's group hosted a group of 30 widows at her farm for a day of "loving on" these widows. This was a day where the focus was on each one of these widows, providing tea, a substantial lunch, health assessments, and an ample supply of food staples to help stretch their meager supplies. These widows are so very grateful for the opportunity to gather together in fellowship and mutual support.



Our lead nurse attending to the needs of a widow.



One of our students engaged with another widow.

### Lessons learned

As with every trip to Kenya, I often wonder what lessons I am supposed to learn from the people and the various experiences I have. Sometimes those lessons come after a trip, but sometimes they happen in the moment before I leave the country.

And that is what happened this last trip.

I have written before about my friend Margaret, a widow who lives near the Muhanji farm. We have been friends for many years now, and also share a love of knitting and the fiber arts. Near the end of my trip, Margaret joined me one afternoon at the Muhanji farm at Rose's invitation. Rose provided tea for our knitting time, then a lovely lunch. As Margaret left in the later afternoon, she did not go home empty-handed, for Rose had prepared some food staples for Margaret to take home.



Margaret showing off her new shawl.

As Margaret left the Muhanji farm that afternoon, we had no idea what would transpire later in the evening. Shortly after our evening meal was finished, Rose received a call that Margaret's daughter, Mercy, had succumbed to her illness and passed away. Mercy was only in her early 30s and had 2 children in their early teens. To complicate things even further, Mercy was the one trying to provide financial assistance to her mom. Now, that small but steady support was gone.

A few hours after the shocking news, Rose told me that we would be going to Margaret's home to pray and grieve with her. I readied myself for a long and emotional night. As we neared Margaret's home, we heard the sounds of raw grief echoing throughout the area. We entered the humble home and joined others who were already there, and sat with them, prayed, and then they began singing. I later learned that this was a part of the Kenyan culture; that singing helps in the grieving. As I sat with the others, I assessed the environment we were in, that of Margaret's home. I had

been there before in the dry season, but now it was rainy season, and the home was damp, smelled of mold and wet materials, and was not a safe or healthy environment for anyone. In my processing over the next few days, I discussed with my hosts what could be done for widows like Margaret to insure that they had proper housing. We are still exploring this idea but it is beginning to take shape in a more formal initiative for widows' support. This would be more than just an annual day of serving them, but rather an ongoing effort to assist the widows of this community with acceptable housing and the resources so they can thrive and become more independent. Additional specifics about this project will be available after the new year. And if you would like to read more specific details about Margaret's loss and my personal reflections, I have attached that as a separate document from this one.

### Looking Ahead

I am so grateful God continues to provide the necessary resources to maintain Marafiki's education related work in rural Kenya. Many thanks to all who continue to support Marafiki through financial gifts, prayers, and encouragement. Marafiki's work in rural Kenya is truly a model of collaboration with the communities we serve, bringing hope to the people of this region.

### Goals for 2026

- Developing an ongoing ministry to widows that includes stable housing, connections to area resources for basic living needs, and healthcare.
- Maintaining current education programs at Musembe and in the surrounding area; those include the scholarship programs for students from Musembe and professional development for teachers. **Note:** supporting a student for high school is \$600 per year with a 4-year commitment.
- Expanding the scholarship program to include students who have successfully completed high school who wish to pursue teacher education at the university level.

- Exploring further health education possibilities in schools in western Kenya.
- Exploring possible partnerships in higher education institutions.

If God is prompting you to give financially to Marafiki, it is easy to give on the website directly at <http://www.marafiki.us/> or via a check mailed to:

Marafiki, Inc.  
PO Box 332  
Newberg, OR 97132

On behalf of Marafiki, I wish you a wonderful New Year!

Many blessings,  
Eloise Hockett



The plains of Samburu.