

# Habari Gani

## 'What's news?' with the Australia Tanzania Society

Rafiki Surgical Missions, Australia Tanzania Young Ambassadors and Safina Foundation

## What a year!

Thanks for reading our new look newsletter that now combines the news about Rafiki Surgical Missions, Australia Tanzania Young Ambassadors and Safina Foundation, which all come under the banner of the Australia Tanzania Society.

We have achieved a huge amount this year across the three groups. We've sent two surgical missions to Tanzania and completed a total of 108 operations. The Rafiki Ball in May was a great success, and great fun. We also packed and sent six containers of medical equipment to Tanzania, bringing our total to 39.

We've built a three double classrooms for schools in the Dar es Salaam region and sent school

equipment, books and supplies.

Safina Foundation is our newest endeavour, supporting orphanages in Tanzania. We've sent equipment to Moya wa Haruma in Geita and have completed extensive renovations at NIRA orphanage in Dar es Salaam.

All great achievements from a relatively small group of people who all work on a volunteer basis.

We would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Thank you all for your support in 2015 and we look forward to what next year will bring.



# Australia Tanzania Society



## ATS Structure

While many of you will know of Rafiki well, it is just one of the organisations under the **Australia Tanzania Society** banner. Over the past 12 years, while keeping each group separate, we have branched out from health, to include, education and youth support with the establishment of Australia Tanzania Young Ambassadors and, more recently, Safina Foundation. *All money raised for each individual group is used solely for that organisation and there is no cross-over of funds.*

**Rafiki Surgical Missions** is the biggest, longest running and most well known arm of our NGO. Since our first mission in 2004, Rafiki Surgical Missions has changed the lives of more than 1,300 Tanzanian children and adults with conditions such as cleft lip, cleft palate and burns injuries. We also pack and send containers of medical equipment to clinics and hospitals all across Tanzania.

In 2006 **Australia Tanzania Young Ambassadors** was formed. ATYA provides a platform for young Australians to establish links with their peers in Tanzania. These links help students in Tanzania and Australia build a better understanding of the world beyond their own borders. ATYA also raises funds to build classrooms, drill water wells, buy curriculum text books and send school supplies and equipment to Tanzania.

After a request for support from an orphanage in Geita, where a lot of our Rafiki patients come from, we established **Safina Foundation** in 2014. 'Safina' means 'arc' in Swahili and embodies the spirit of supporting young orphaned and poverty-stricken children. We have been helping the orphanage in Geita and also started a second project, which is extensive renovations and building works to a small orphanage in Dar es Salaam.

# Rafiki

## Surgical Missions

### November 2015 Mission



**The November mission team** of Andrew Crocker, Brigid Corrigan, Andrew Wild, Steve Crocker, Alice Haydon, Lindy Crocker, Heather Snowdon, Cathy Lubrano, James Smith and Taka Wild (pictured above) saw a massive 133 patients! On clinic day 106 patients were seen and a further 27 during the mission.

For safety reasons we have a strict weight and age minimum, and many patients were under weight or sick with malaria, however the team still operated on a huge number of patients. The majority were cleft lip repairs and burns contractures and some were others including debunking a vascular malformation on a lip.

Geita Gold Mine's Community Officer, Musa Lucas, is a very familiar, smiling face around the hospital during Rafiki missions. This mission he took the team members to visit Geita, where many of our patients are found. Follow up appointments are not easily made in Tanzania, where the patients are living in very isolated areas, which lack easy communication, however this visit

the team were we were lucky enough to see a previous patient. She had her cleft lip repaired in October 2013, then cleft palate repaired in April 2015. Now her little sister also needs her cleft lip repaired and mother and baby came to see the team on clinic day. Right now, she is underweight, but the team will recall her for the April 2016 mission.

We have heard reports (although there is no photographic evidence) that a certain 'team leader' broke protocol after forgetting the keys to the equipment room one morning. With no regard for her own safety, and thinking only of the team, she jumped on the back of a motorbike (piki piki) and sped back to the hotel to retrieve the keys. To top it off the heavens opened and it started pouring with rain. She returned, very embarrassed and soggy, but thankfully in one piece, to let the team in to start the day's work. As this is a first offence, and after so many years of hard work and devotion to Rafiki, we will forgive her (this time!).



A past Rafiki patient who had a cleft and lip repair



All smiles in surgery

# Volunteer Experience

*None of our missions are possible without the support and contributions of our Rafiki family. This year, we are very grateful to Deidre Willmott and Michael Lishman who were the successful bidders for the 'Volunteer Experience' offered at the Rafiki Ball. Deidre and Michael attended the November mission and here's a piece Deidre wrote. Many thanks Deidre and Michael.*

A few months ago we went to the Rafiki Ball at which we successfully bid for a trip to Tanzania that included spending time with the Rafiki Surgical Mission on one of their twice yearly visits. Our host Carolyn Bellamy had been before and promised us it would be the trip of a lifetime.

It has lived up to that in every respect.

Since arriving in Mwanza on Lake Victoria we have been allowed to join the Rafiki team at the hospital even in the operating theatre. We have watched highly skilled plastic surgeons Andrew and Brigid at work with anaesthetists Andrew and Steve, scrub nurses Alice and Kathy, recovery nurse Jamie, nurses and organisers extraordinaire Taka and Lindy, physiotherapist Heather and Steve, a recent medical graduate. We have met young and not so young patients who have made the journey to Mwanza from up to 100s of kilometres away in the hopes of being able to have surgery performed by the Rafiki team.

The team are all truly amazing. They work with the barest of facilities. The operating theatre is a small room with two operating tables so they can work on two patients at a time. Supplies including two purpose built anaesthesia units are all brought in about 20 suitcases from Perth. The suitcases are arranged around the theatre and the neighbouring supply room. After theatre, the patients are taken to a tiny recovery room with just two beds. From there they are taken to two small wards where they sleep on mattresses on the floor. These rooms are an amazingly lively mix of children and their parents along with adults all waiting for surgery or recovering from surgery.

Many of the operations are cleft lips and palate and burns injuries. We have got to watch both. The cleft lips that we saw were transformed in less than an hour. It was especially rewarding to see



a beautiful little girl have her lip closed and a 22 year old woman who was quite overwhelmed when she saw her new lip. The burns operations were more complicated and involved releasing joints in fingers, shoulders and even a hip where the skin had contracted following burns. These injuries are sadly all too common with open fires in the villages. Following the release of the joints the skin is sown back together in a new 'Z' shape to allow normal movement of the joint and skin grafts are applied to exposed gaps.

I have never seen surgery up close like this before and I have been amazed by how such large wounds can be closed up and stitched together so neatly. It is truly like watching artists at work.

I also got to visit the ward and join Lindy and Heather playing with the children. While this is fun it is also an important part of their recovery. Heather is a great hit with bubbles and balloons all designed to train limbs to move again.

The team also spends a considerable amount of time here training local medical staff and students. The tiny operating theatre has been filled with people the whole time.



*Still smiling post-op!*

This journey has been an amazing experience for us. We saw how a donation to Rafiki has a direct and real benefit for individuals who could never have afforded a much needed operation. These operations are truly life changing allowing these people to lead normal independent lives that might otherwise have not been possible.

We have of course also been reminded again how lucky we are to live in a country where conditions like cleft lips are routinely treated within the first few months of life and where injuries such as burns occur less frequently and are treated immediately.

Special mention goes to the companies that support Rafiki particularly AngloGold Ashanti which employs 3000 Tanzanians at Geita Goldmine three and a half hours from Mwanza. They run a special

program to bring local villagers to the Rafiki mission for surgery. Their community affairs officer Musa Shunashu personally brings the patients to Mwanza and plays a really important part in extending the good that Rafiki does as widely as possible.

Of course Tanzania is also a great place for a holiday and we have already been to Zanzibar where we stayed at Asilia's Matemwe Retreat. From Mwanza we are looking forward to staying at the Serena Safari Lodges in the Serengeti and at Ngorongoro Crater, hoping we see lots of African wildlife! Then home on Qatar Airways.

It has been an amazing privilege to be part of the Rafiki Surgical Mission and we would recommend it to anyone without hesitation.



*Clockwise from left: Deidre in theatre, pre and post-op results, Lindy with a patient and the Wilds doing what they do best.*



# Ambulances from Japan

Through the Tanzanian Embassy in Japan, we have been lucky enough to secure three donated, second hand ambulances. By funding the transportation of the ambulances we will be able to donate the ambulances to needy hospitals in Tanzania. Freight Forwarders Tanzania has once again helped us out by supporting the transportation of the vehicles and they will reach Tanzania in the New Year. Thank you again, Freight Forwarders Tanzania.



# Storage Space found!

Thank you to Harry Bray who came to our rescue after we lost our storage space at Woodside Hospital. We now have a home to hold equipment while waiting for enough to fill a shipping container. Thank you so much Harry.

# Medical Equipment



During 2015 we have packed and sent six 40 foot containers of equipment that has been distributed to areas such as Dar es Salaam, Mufindi, Geita and Sekou Toure. Didier Murcia and Thierry Murcia visited Muhimbili National Hospital, which is the main public hospital in Tanzania, and met with hospital official as well as some nurses who were very happy with the donations. We were also given a couple of [news articles](#) from Member of Parliament, and big Rafiki supporter, Cosato Chumi, who was very thankful to be able to hand some equipment to the district hospital in Mufindi.

# Hassan Dhala Channel open 2015

Hassan Dhala was a huge supporter of Rafiki, and to honour his memory, his family have sponsored a deep-sea fishing contest in Dar es Salaam that Hassan used to participate in.

As well as signage on the huge fridge, a percentage of the boat auction, which was held on the evening of the 5th of November, was donated to Rafiki. Thank you to the Dhala family.

# Congratulations and Thank You!

Congratulations and thank you to Tom and Kristen Eadie for nominating Rafiki as their charity of choice and directing their wedding gifts to us. Donations can be made via Rotary at our web site [www.asanterafiki.com](http://www.asanterafiki.com)

# Australia Tanzania Young Ambassadors

## Six New Classrooms

With the support of the Australian High Commission, this year we built double classrooms at Majani Ya Chai Primary, Juhudi Primary and Millenia Ya Tatu in Dar es Salaam, giving them much more space in classrooms that would often house more 140 students.

Thank you to the Walsh family from Busselton for their generous donation, which allowed us to join with the High Commission to fund the six classrooms.

Scotch College donated school equipment including 388 chairs, 96 tables and school books, which we transported to Tanzania. Thanks to Nadia and Chris Holloway and Peta Wheildon, PLC also donated hundreds of boxes of school supplies, which will be put to good use.

A huge achievement for us, is that now all of the schools we support have water wells. Not only for drinking, which increases concentration levels, the water helps the schools be more sanitary and saves time when the children would normally have to go and fetch water during school hours. The schools can also sell the water to the community, which benefits the local people with better access and also helps the school generate a small amount of income for equipment and supplies.

We will continue to support schools next year and will be looking at some new classroom and water well projects.



*Clockwise from left: New double class room at Majani ya Chai, Milenia and Juhudi Primary Schools.*

# Safina Foundation

## NIRA Renovations

Find us on 

This year we have been renovating NIRA Orphanage in the Mbagala area of Dar es Salaam. So far we have renovated the dorms, office, dining room, toilets, security wall and provided them with a water well.

NIRA is a small orphanage, which has been run privately for eight years by a lady named Edith. Fifteen girls and three young boys live at the orphanage and Edith also supports children in boarding school and some very poor children in the community whose families are struggling to care for them – a total of 40 children.

The renovations are now completed and the orphanage has better living conditions and is able to sell their water to the local community for 100 Tanzanian Shillings per bucket; this goes towards the living expenses of the orphans.

There is a partly built house on the property and we have started working with a builder to get it converted to better accommodation for the girls. This will be our next project at NIRA and we look forward to updating you on the progress.

Thank you to the Walsh Family and the Rotary Clubs of Mandurah City, Mandurah Districts and Melville for their generous donations, which has allowed us to make huge changes at NIRA.

*Please 'like' Safina Foundation on Facebook for more progress pictures.*



## Laptops

This month we were able to hand over some laptops, donated by Lumi and with the girls at Penrhos funding internet for the orphanage, the world will soon open up up! We are hoping to get some volunteers, either based in Tanzania or from Australia to spend time with the girls to teach them some basic computer skills. Thank you to Lumi for donating the laptops and Penrhos College. The girls were so excited about the laptops, which are not just a new toy, but something that will give them skills to greatly increase their chances of employment later on.

