



# Ben and Katy Ray

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**Location:** Tanzania



**What we do:** Working with people with disabilities, providing training so they can earn a living



**Empowering** people pushed to the edges of life to release their God-given potential

Dear friends,

God's grace and peace to you all from Usa River, Tanzania. We hope the new year has begun well for each of you.

We want to praise God for a wonderful Christmas present in late December, when GIZ (a German development organisation) sent SAFI Tanzania the first part of its funding. This was donated to set up a new training and innovations hub, deaf-run cafe and crafts shop here. Please pray with us that we'd make good use of this grant and that it would have a huge kingdom impact in the community.

### Seeding growth

Our team at SAFI is slowly growing and we have a total of 14 people engaged with the project so far.

Our target is to train and start enterprises with 84 or more deaf and physically disabled participants over the next two years. As you may have already seen from a recent update video, the first of twelve enterprises has now been established.

Zawadi Toys is a group of three young deaf women making dolls and toys. Their unique selling point is that the dolls can be accessorised with clothing made with "mitumba" (recycled clothing). It has been such a joy having these beautiful artisans working with us and very fulfilling to see them grow in confidence as they learn new skills. We'll miss them when they're working from home! The toys are already a popular item at our Dar es Salaam shop and we ask you to pray with us that these women would grow in business acumen and the knowledge of God's love for them as their enterprise grows.

The next three businesses will be: ceramic jewellery, T-shirt printing and wooden accessories, so watch this space to see how they get on. You can also connect with us via our WhatsApp broadcast group by texting+255783760945 or follow us on Instagram: @SAFI.Tanzania.

### Ernest's story

I was born in Moshi, Tanzania, near to Mount Kilimanjaro in 1997. I have always been deaf, but my parents made sure that I still attended school. At six years old I was sent to deaf boarding school in Iringa (800km away from Moshi). Here I studied with a number of friends who now work at the nearby Neema Crafts. My dad travelled with me to school on the first day, but then I stayed there until the holidays each year. I finished



The Zawadi Toys team

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**With Jesus  
With each other  
To the edges**



primary school at sixteen years old and then went on to Malangali Secondary School in Mafinga, which is even further away from home. I carried on here until the age of 20.

Unfortunately, I failed my Year 4 exams so I couldn't go on to sixth form. It was really hard to learn at the secondary school because the teachers didn't take time to use sign language. I also found English difficult to understand because they don't use it in primary school. After school, I studied welding at the government vocational training centre VETA, but realised quickly this wasn't for me. I then tried a number of other jobs like carpentry in Moshi and even pig farming in Dar, but I left this as they only paid me £30/month to be in the hot sun all day.

Eventually, I came back to help my dad with his bicycle repair business in Usa River. My dad's shop is only 100m down the road from the SAFI

Centre, so that's how I found out about the carpentry training here. I'm now making chopping boards and chairs, and I'm finally earning enough to be self-reliant. I'm most looking forward to SAFI opening a cafe because I'd really like to train to be a cook.

### Family news

We spent our Christmas break with our old friends in Iringa. Now we're more established in our new home it felt much easier to be back in our old town compared with last year. Hannah and Joseph Adams very graciously let us greet all of our old colleagues at Neema Crafts before inviting us to the end of year Christmas party. One of us was very happy to dress up as Father Christmas once again and share sweets with everyone as well as get away with some atrocious dancing!

Zaki's was the Christmas present we were all waiting to arrive this time. He's got so into wildlife photography, inspired by local safari photographers, his grandparents love of butterflies and his dad's love of birds. When it arrived (weeks after Christmas) the camera had had the battery removed! So after another long wait, Zaki finally had it working in time for his class trip to the Tarangire National Park.

A number of you have asked whether it's possible to get hold of Katy's wildlife paintings. She's been busy assembling an online shop and Katy Ray Designs Tz has now gone live on Etsy. If you'd like to buy a print, go to: [katyraydesignstz.etsy.com](https://katyraydesignstz.etsy.com)

### Closer fellowship

*"And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching."* (Hebrews 10:24–25)

Our Usa River Fellowship has begun to build momentum as we now meet every week. It has been an incredible source of encouragement, prayer and mutual support to us both as we live out being a Christian in this unique community. Please pray with us as we continue to reach out to the many seekers he brings across our paths. Pray that we can experience a move of his Spirit within the community and for the success of an Alpha course we intend to start soon.

With love and blessings, Ben and Katy X



**Photos from top to bottom:** Ernest has been learning carpentry; Victoria makes a starfish; our family with Zaki's wild dog birthday cake; Zaki's Lilac Breasted Roller.



## Empowering people pushed to the edges of life

**We've been encouraged to hear recent mission stories from around our wider area of work.** In South Sudan, communities have taken steps towards peace as pastors from different tribal groups reconciled, and our colleague Joan has shared a growing vision of a new tribe of peacemakers. Read more at [churchmissionsociety.org/empower](https://churchmissionsociety.org/empower)

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