



# Ben and Katy Ray

Link Letter no. 33 | May 2024

Contact details:  
benandkaty@hotmail.co.uk



**Location:** Tanzania



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

To our dear supporters,

We write to you from our new offices in Usa River! Since we last wrote we've been on quite a journey seeking the right place to base our work. You may remember Katy's remarkable story of meeting a local lodge owner who promptly offered to build us a place on their land. Since that point, the same lodge came close to buying a 26 acre, abandoned hotel site which offered a vast and beautiful space from which SAFI (our NGO) could operate its new centre. As you can imagine, there's been lots of waiting, wondering and hoping throughout this time.

For various reasons, neither option finally materialised. We're not yet sure why we were lead so far up this particular garden path, but we've certainly learned to lean not on our own understanding. We're now excited about the place we've finally settled on. It's far less impressive, just a simple half-acre plot with two small buildings, one of which used to be the old post office. But what we love about it is its proximity to the town centre and the hubbub of normal Tanzanian life. No sooner had we signed the lease than the council literally redirected an important road to run past our entrance – it seems like a confirmation that we're in the right place for now.



*Alan helps to get the new centre ready.*

## Making good

Alan Chapotte is the talented deaf carpenter who helped Neema Crafts create its first custom furniture. We'd been speaking to him for some time about helping us to kick start our carpentry programme up here and so we were grateful when he made the move north a couple of months ago. While not yet having a workshop, he's been busy using his practical skills to help us set up the new centre.

We're so pleased Alan has found a good church to attend that has an excellent sign interpreter. Alan has also supported us to connect with the local deaf community. It says something about the size of the deaf population and the lack of employment that we've already received numerous application forms in just the couple of weeks we've been here. We even had one applicant come all the way from Nairobi, Kenya, to see us!

We look forward to seeing Alan take the lead on a new carpentry project and train new deaf and disabled recruits. Please pray with us that our small workshop would soon be connected to the three-phase electricity supply and be equipped with the machinery and resources it needs.

## Joining hands

SAFI Tanzania aims to start collaborative projects with other organisations across Tanzania. One example is with the Rural Development Organisation (RDO) in Mufindi, in the south of Tanzania. They're training local

**Support Ben and Katy:**  
[churchmissionsociety.org/ray](https://churchmissionsociety.org/ray)

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



people how to make the most of the natural clay deposits in that area. SAFI has begun sponsoring two deaf trainees, Maneno and Magdalena, to learn how to create ceramic products with one of Tanzania's most experienced potters. We hope that at the end of the six-month course, Maneno and Magdalena will be able to start their own business, producing a

new range of ceramic items for sale through the SAFI outlets and elsewhere.

### Charitable status

As well as creating livelihoods for people with disabilities, SAFI Tanzania aims to redirect any surplus income from its sales into the deaf and disabled communities with which we come into contact. This has led to wheelchairs being bought, bridges being made and even homes being built for various people. However, the scale of what we have been able to do has been greatly limited by not having charitable status for the NGO. Legally here, an organisation must first have three years of audited accounts before it can be granted this status, which offers exemption from a number of taxes. We now have the three years of accounts required to complete our application – please do pray with us that we can be granted charitable status this year as it will mean we can support a much wider number of people.

### Swimming, cycling and running the race

Thank you everyone who prayed for Katy's knee. Last month, Katy was able to compete in her first triathlon! Both she and her knee stayed strong throughout and she finished in an impressive second place. Ben was in training for the half marathon, but conveniently unfortunately picked up a severe case of man-flu the week before the competition.

### Closer fellowship

For Sunday church we've been enjoying attending the Arusha Vineyard Church (40 mins drive away), but we've both been missing the intimacy of the small, local fellowship we had in Iringa. A few friends and families from the school have been attempting to start an Usa Community Fellowship in these last few months. Holidays and lack of fixed venue have made it slow going so far, but we're hoping to begin meeting at the new SAFI offices this Sunday, so please pray with us that the fellowship begins to take root and becomes an important feature in the community. Please also pray for the Youth Alpha started by the fellowship, that this develops into a thriving youth group.

### Visiting parents

Praise God with us that our three children are all flourishing here. They thoroughly enjoyed having their grandparents visit over the Easter holidays and learned how to identify and photograph many species of butterfly. Please do pray that they continue to stay well and make good friendships at their school.

With lots of love,  
Ben and Katy xxx



*Photos from top to bottom: Alan, Tula and Katy's parents join us for Easter; job applicants outside the new offices; Maneno uses a jigger machine; SAFI helped Justine connect to mains electricity.*



## Going further with Church Mission Society

Could God be calling you to follow him to the edges with CMS? We'd love to connect and help you discern what God might be saying. Find out more about how we can help you to step into God's mission at [churchmissionsociety.org/explore](https://churchmissionsociety.org/explore)

Please note that opinions expressed in link letters are those of mission partners, not necessarily of Church Mission Society.

If you would like to discuss your mailings with us or to receive this link letter on a regular basis, please email [supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org](mailto:supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org) or call 01865 787400. Church Mission Society is a mission community acknowledged by the Church of England. Registered Company No. 6985330 and Registered Charity No. 1131655 (England and Wales) and SC047163 (Scotland).