

# Mercy Ships Fact Sheet

Updated January 2012

## About Mercy Ships



Ali, Sierra Leone  
Cleft Lip Repair



Maomai, Benin  
Tumour Removal



Alexis, Nadège, Ricardo,  
Benin, Cataract Removal



Floating Hospitals



Surgeries & Health Care



Training of local professionals



Community Empowerment

Lives  
transformed  
through hope  
and healing...

Mercy Ships is an international faith-based organization, with a mission to increase access to health care throughout the world. Through the deployment of the world's largest, private hospital ship, the *Africa Mercy*, Mercy Ships works with host nations to help fill the gaps in health care systems, while serving the dire and immediate needs of their population. Mercy Ships provides a variety of training opportunities for medical professionals (surgeons, nurses, anesthesia providers, administrators, and community health workers), along with curative surgical interventions. Collaborating with qualified local and international partners, Mercy Ships programs offer holistic support to developing nations striving to make health care accessible for all. Since 1978, Mercy Ships has had more than 2.35 million direct beneficiaries. The countries served by Mercy Ships are ranked as the poorest in the world by the United Nations Human Development Index.

### Founder & History

While living in Lausanne, Don Stephens began a journey that led to the founding of Mercy Ships. Don formed and led a team that surveyed suitable ocean liners for the dream of a hospital ship to serve the world's poor. In 1978, the dream became a reality with the purchase of the first ship, the *Anastasis*. Another milestone was reached in 2007 with the launching of the *Africa Mercy*, the largest of the four hospital ships operated by our organisation in its 34 year history.

Don and his wife Deyon and their four children lived onboard the first Mercy Ship for 10 years. Now based in the USA, the Stephens have overseen the growth of Mercy Ships from its humble beginnings to an organisation that has in its history had thousands of professional volunteers. Don serves on the 35-member Mercy Ships International Board with members from 12 nations.

### Mercy Ships Global

Mercy Ships Global functions as an association of 16 national entities which support the work of the Hospital Ship in West Africa. Mercy Ships Global is based in Lausanne Switzerland.

## Ships and Field Programmes

### Vessels & Locations

With offices in 16 nations, Mercy Ships operates hospital ships serving some of the poorest developing nations of the world. The *Africa Mercy* is the world's largest non-governmental hospital ship, and is dedicated to the continent of Africa. The success of the *Africa Mercy* project gives us confidence to further expand our fleet (in the coming years). Mercy Ships has over 1,200 volunteer career staff and crew from over 40 nations and over 2,000 short-term volunteers annually.

### Programmes & Services

Mercy Ships programmes promote health and well-being by empowering developing nations through capacity building and by meeting the urgent surgical needs of the world's forgotten poor. Mercy Ships has provided services and materials in developing nations valued at more than \$1 billion, including the following:

- Performed more than 61,000 life-changing operations such as cleft lip and palate repair, cataract removal, orthopaedic procedures, facial reconstruction and obstetric fistula repair.
- Treated over 539,000 patients in village clinics, with over 109,000 dental patients with more than 278,000 dental procedures performed.
- Trained more than 5,770 local health-care teachers who have in turn trained many others.
- Trained over 29,400 local professionals in their area of expertise (anesthesiology, midwifery, sterilization, orthopaedic and reconstructive surgery, leadership)
- Taught over 150,000 local people in basic health care.
- Completed over 1,100 community development projects focusing on water and sanitation, education, infrastructure development and agriculture.

### Finances

Funding for Mercy Ships is provided primarily through private donations. Volunteers serving on the ships and field contribute monthly fees, enabling Mercy Ships to deliver medical and development services for a fraction of the usual cost.

