

Weekly Scoop – Week of 16 January 2017

What's Happening

23-24 Jan: Maxfax Screening

6 Feb: Goiter Surgeon Screening

7 Feb: Maxfax Surgeon Screening

13 Feb: Maxfax Surgeon Screening

15 Feb: Ambulatory Screening

20 Feb: Goiter Surgeon Screening

News Updates



BEE160823_SCREENING_GEN_TB0053_MID

Join us in celebrating 663 free surgeries provided so far this field service in Benin! Our patients are forever grateful for a chance to keep hoping, dreaming and living. Thanks to our volunteers and supporters who've made it all possible. We look forward to what the future has in store!



BEE170109_YASMIN_MERCI_ON_DOCK_CASTS_OFF_MO0022_MID

Friendship. It's just one of the perks of weekly rehab appointments. These two girls recently had their casts removed...forever! With bowed legs now a thing of the past, stretching and exercising with our Physical Therapists is super important to keep their newly straightened legs healthy and strong. Even stronger are the bonds forming between so many of our young patients, their healing giggles echoing around the dock.

Patient Update



BEE161023_MABOUBA_PAT05067_ADMISSIONS_KS0003_MID

“It was in 2010 that it started,” the 23-year-old recalls. At the time, Mabouba was finishing up her junior year of high school with plans to become a midwife. The tumor changed all that.



BEE161028_KABIR_PAT30059_EYE_SCREENING_MO0004_MID BEE161028_PAT30054_KABIR_JF0001_MID

“Because brothers don’t let each other wander in the dark alone.” – Jolene Perry

63-year old Kabir can’t walk, nor can he see. But his loving brothers have never given up on him. They’ve carried him, literally on their backs, to get to Mercy Ships. And while the polio that struck Kabir’s legs when he was a child has left irreparable damage, seeing the world again is a hope that is within Kabir’s reach. Knowing his free cataract surgery is just around the corner, what do his eyes look forward to most? *“Seeing everything,”* says Kabir.



BEE161214_MIRACLE_REHAB_JF0003_MID



BEE161214_MIRACLE_REHAB_JF0004_MID

Three-year old Miracle was born with a windswept leg, which kept her from walking like the other kids. But now, she's had free surgery and is recovering – *and smiling!* (Except when she tells her mom, “*Get this cast off my leg!*”) Soon, Miracle's cast *will* come off. We can barely wait...and neither can she!

Photographer's Picks



BEE170104_DJAZIM_PAT09150_DOCK_CAST_CHANGE_MO0008_MID

“Outrageously funny - that's the only way to describe Djazim, a little ortho patient who has captured everyone's heart. ‘You are the only patient who giggles when I take your cast off,’ Physical Therapist Aisling says to him, as they both laugh uncontrollably while she cuts the old cast away. Djazim's contagious laughter constantly lifts our spirits and I love catching his exuberance on camera!”

– Miguel Ottaviano, Africa Mercy Photographer

Did You Know...?



MGC151214_PAT06071_BAOVELO_JF0001_MID

Every year in Madagascar, 50,000 women join the ranks of those suffering with obstetric fistula (OBF). Instead of a living baby, a long and painful labor has delivered them constant shame – a tear (known as OBF) which causes them to leak from their bowels, prevents them from having more children, and often leaves them alone.

But a simple surgery can help fix *all* that. Last year, Mercy Ships established the second of only two OBF clinics in Madagascar which are open *daily* – unlike any other within the country. When the ship

departed, the clinic, staffed predominantly by *Africa Mercy*-trained nurses, was handed over to the Freedom From Fistula Foundation. There women receive much needed surgeries and follow-up care – and it isn't going to stop any time soon.

Prayer Points



BEE161018_SONIA_PAT08477_SURGEON_SCREENING_KC0001_MID

We pray for wisdom and direction for our surgeons and nurses as they examine new patients and schedule more maxillofacial surgeries in the weeks and months to come. We also pray for the families making their way to the *Africa Mercy*, that God would answer their prayers and deliver on his promises of “a hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Crew Bio – Rose Kargbo (USA)



BEE170120_ROSE_KARGBO_USA_WARD_NURSE_JF0001_MID

Rose Kargbo explains her life path in one short sentence. “I’m coming to the Africa Mercy from California by way of New York, originally from Liberia.” She’s in the middle of checking on a patient in D ward, a young boy, Saidou, recovering from surgery to heal massive burns to his chest. “It’s amazing he’s alive,” she says later. “To be burned near your respiratory system, and then to not be treated for years after - he must have really fought.”

When it comes to healthcare, Rose is no stranger to the challenges most people in West Africa face, as her father is one of a handful of physicians in Liberia. “Growing up, there was always a constant stream of people coming to our house for help. My dad never turned anyone away.” When the civil war hit, even during the worst years, he would venture the streets to help. “I watched his patience and love that entire time,” says Rose. “He’s definitely the person who inspires me.”

When Rose was 13, the family, like many others, eventually fled the war. After living in nearby Cote D’Ivoire for some years, they boarded a plane to the States. “It’s funny,” she laughs. “From the moment I walked into JFK, I just knew the US was not going to be my permanent home.”

Years later, after going through university and nursing school, Rose is making plans to return to Liberia, for good. “I went for the first time in March of 2016,” she says “I felt so at home, so at peace.” She’s currently pursuing a masters in Global Health – an experiential learning program which in three years’ time, will land her back in Liberia. “I want to work to improve the healthcare system there. If we really want to see things progress, it has to be done from the inside out,” she says.

The system in Liberia is a good microcosm of the healthcare situation in the region. “It really boils down to accountability,” she says. “Western healthcare systems provide better care, because at the end of the day there’s someone checking whether things actually get done or not.” Rose nods her head. “And we can have that too - it’ll happen.” Statistics agree. According to Data from the World Bank, life expectancy and total expenditure on healthcare have seen a promising rise in Liberia over the past five decades.

So how does being on the *Africa Mercy* fit in to all of this? Rose is finding out. “I know God directed me here,” she says. She’s spending the next few months as a ward nurse, caring for patients in the way she always saw her father do. “It’s such a gift,” she says. “Being able to care for my own people, being able to learn about conditions I would have had no idea about in the States.” Meanwhile, Rose spends as much time as possible being in West Africa itself - that means venturing off the ship during free time. “It’s hard to explain to people in the US, but even with all the difficulties, even with the lack of healthcare and infrastructure, there’s something amazing about my home, about West Africa. Whenever I’m here, I feel better, I feel more alive.”