

Weekly Scoop – Week of 30 January 2017

What's Happening

6 Feb: Goiter Surgeon Screening
7 Feb: Maxfax Surgeon Screening
13 Feb: Maxfax Surgeon Screening
14 Feb: Valentine's Day
15 Feb: Ambulatory Screening
17 Feb: Celebration of Sight
20 Feb: Goiter Surgeon Screening
23-24 Feb: OBF Histories
27 Feb: OBF Surgeon Screening
28 Feb: Maxfax Surgeon Screening

News Updates



BEE170126_OR_CHECKLIST_MCB_TB0005_MID

“I love the checklist.” Hermine, a health educator at Saint Luc Hospital, says. She’s spent two days with her operating team hashing out their own version of the WHO safe surgery checklist – a list of simple procedures proven to cut operating room deaths nearly in half. For the past four months, *Mercy Ships* medical capacity building team has travelled all over Benin, facilitating these multiday trainings with almost every operating team in the country. “It’s amazing how much this changes things, how many lives a simple training can save,” says Nina Capo-Chichi, a member of the team and a native of Benin. “And it’s amazing that nearly *every* operating room in the country is now equipped.”

But the work’s not done – the *Mercy Ships* team is starting round two - evaluation. “How effective *really* are these trainings? How much is *actually* changing in the operating theatre?” says Krissy Close (USA), Team Lead for the WHO safe surgery checklist trainings. “It’s rare that Medical Capacity Building projects in the developing world are actually *evaluated* – so much work and money goes in, but in the end, what kind of difference is being made, and how can we do our work better? We’re excited to find out.”



BEE170202_MCB_DENTAL_SEMINAR_AFM_JF0001_MID

Mercy Ships Dental Clinic has been operating for nearly five months now, providing more than 7,900 free dental procedures to people in Benin. Even so, the lines outside continue to snake around the compound – “We normally can’t get good dental care here,” says one patient. “It’s very hard.” The clinic could operate for years, and probably *still* be overflowing.

That’s why the *Africa Mercy* Medical Capacity Building team has partnered with eight local dentists, beginning the first of a four-part teaching seminar. The courses are aimed at equipping dental professionals here in Benin with essential knowledge, so that when the ship leaves, the people still waiting in line will have a better shot at getting good care.



BEE170128_KING_OF_ABOMEY_VISIT_JF0061_MID

If you get the chance to dance with the Prince of Abomey...take it! *Mercy Ships* volunteer Lyndy Cossey (UK) shows of her stuff to a cheering crowd....and national television! Last weekend 70 or so *Africa Mercy* crew attended a royal banquet, held in honor of the ship's work in Benin. Many heartfelt thanks to Blaise Ahanhanzo-Glèlè for his generous hospitality!

Patient Update



BEE161109_MABOUBA_PAT05067_WYSS_WARD_KC0001_MID

For six years Mabouba had been trying to get to Switzerland, where the rest of her family lives. “But, because of my condition, the visa application process [has] dragged,” she explains. But on the *Africa Mercy*, Switzerland came to her. Myriam Wyss (CHE) a volunteer nurse living close to Mabouba’s family, cares for the young woman as she recovers from surgery removing a life-threatening tumor.



BEE170123_KAYLA_INNIS_SCREENING_NURSE_USA_TB0001_MID

“Djaliou, you played life risky from the moment you were born -- weighing 4.7 lbs at 3 months old isn't exactly safe. So we took a risk and brought you to the ship.”

- *Africa Mercy* volunteer screening nurse, Kayla Innis (USA), teasing her new bestie while he waits to come on board for surgery. A rare tongue condition has kept this little guy gambling for life....but not anymore.



BEE161028_PAT30633_MARGARET_JF0004_MID

“The person I most want to see is my son,” says Marguerite, anticipating the moment when her vision will be restored. The matriarch has six children, but it’s her eldest that’s stuck with her through it all - hospital after hospital, this medication and that, but all to no avail – they could never gather enough money for cataract surgery. But now, he doesn’t have to – a free operation is available to Marguerite onboard the *Africa Mercy*.

Photographer's Picks



BEE161124_VALERIE_HOME_VISIT_DOOR_JF0001_MID

"I love details and this door is an absolute delight! Scribbled notes, names, phone numbers - an address book of sorts."

-Justine Forrest (AUS), AFM Photographer

Did You Know...?



BEE170201_SURGEONS_GROUP_TB0001-2_MID

We've got eight rock star surgeons volunteering onboard the *Africa Mercy* right now...but we can't help feeling there's *still* someone missing. Tag the surgeon you think we need in this band.

(the idea with this photo came from a brainstorming session with one of the surgeons pictured here – it's for people on Instagram and Facebook to tag it with surgeons they think should volunteer onboard. It'll help get the word out of you find these pictured surgeons on facebook and Instagram and tag them in the photo with the following titles. Here's how:

From the left of the pic...back row:

*Dr. Doug Schulte - Otolaryngology Surgeon – USA
Dr. Glenn Strauss - Ophthalmic Surgeon – USA
Dr. Gary Parker – AFM CMO, MaxFax Surgeon – USA
Dr. Tertius Venter – Plastic Surgeon – ZAF
Dr. David Chong – Plastic Surgeon – AUS
Dr. Shailendra Magdum – Paediatric Neurosurgeon - GBR*

From the left of the pic...front row:

*Dr. Yonas Teklu – Plastic Surgeon – ETH
Dr. Joli Chou – Max Fax Surgeon – CAN*

Let me (anna.psiaki@mercyships.org) know if you have any questions, thoughts or other ideas)

Prayer Points



MGC160308_COM217_EMIL_ELLIOT_SURGERY_OR_KK0002_MID

Over the past few weeks, many complex MaxFax surgeries have been successful. We praise God for seeing patients through to the other side, and for blessing the work of operating teams on board. Pray for this week's surgeries – cases continue to be challenging – and we need God's blessing on the continued work.

Crew Bio : Matt Tveite (USA) - WINDSOR



MGB141015_MATT_TVEITE_JF0001_MID

“Life is too short to waste. Enjoy each day. If you wake up and you’re breathing, it’s a gift from God,” says Matt Tveite (USA), who practices what he preaches. When he received a call from the *Africa Mercy’s* field security officer asking him if he’d be interested in leading a security team for a few weeks in Benin, Matt didn’t waste any opportunity to return to Africa with his wife, Denise.

That’s right, back to Africa. The couple volunteered for two years with Mercy Ships in 2013 (Congo) and 2014 (Madagascar). Matt was the field security officer and Denise was the ship academy’s third grade teacher. Before that, Matt spent 26 years in federal law enforcement.

This time a three-week commitment, Matt managed crowd control and maintained order and security during screening - a busy scene where the ship’s first potential patients come from all around for a chance to see one of Mercy Ships’ doctors. He saw the opportunity as a privilege as well as a responsibility: “I was taught early in my career with Mercy Ships that we do security through love and through relationships. When I’m out on a line, I might be the only member of Mercy Ships that some people will ever meet. If I don’t convey love, respect and kindness through my actions, how will anyone ever know what we stand for?”

Interacting with patients is something Matt treasures. He went on to recall one man in particular who had an extremely large facial tumor. “As we brought a group in, I noticed him across the street and we met eyes. He wasn’t in line, so I motioned to him to do so. Minutes later, we brought the next group in but he wasn’t there. After more time passed, we opened up the doors again, and this time, he was at the front of the line. The people around explained that he was in great need and that’s why they moved him to the front. It was amazing to witness people giving grace to their fellow man.”

Matt says he couldn't have done any of this without God and his support network, to whom he's very grateful: "You may not be the person called to go somewhere like Africa, but you may be called to be part of the team supporting the person who goes."

Considering a volunteer opportunity? Matt suggests that you pray about it. "It's an amazingly fulfilling time and you'll never be the same." Visit www.mercyships.org/volunteer to learn more.