

Weekly Scoop – Week of 9 January 2017

What's Happening

18-Jan: Ambulatory Screening
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



BEE161124_FATIYA_PAT08078_PONSETI_MS001_MID

Fatiya's sister dances her fingers across her younger brother's arm while a trained therapist recasts his lower legs, ankles, and feet. In West Africa, family is everything: it's the extra reassurance that things will be ok. But when your baby brother is born with clubfeet and your family lives under the poverty line, the most you can often give is a reassuring touch. Fortunately for Fatiya and his big sister, their family's just gotten bigger. With the help of CURE international, Cabinet de Kinésithérapeutes et Associes, *Mercy Ships*, and you, Fatiya's feet are becoming straight and his steps assured.



BEE170111_PONSETI_CELEBRATION_JF0014_MID

There's a major cause for celebration for these moms and dads! They brought their babies to Mercy Ships with a debilitating condition known as clubfoot. Now, 11 of the kids have finished their ponseti treatment, which corrects the deformity through weeks of casting and physical therapy. Now, these parents dance for joy knowing their kids will have a better chance to live a more normal life, doing things that other kids can do.

Mercy Ships Medical Capacity Building program is proud to partner with Cabinet de Kinésithérapeutes et Associes of Benin, providing mentoring to local medical professionals in the ponseti method. Our joint efforts in providing free and accessible treatment are making a difference – and leaving a lasting impact.



BEE170113_MAUURICE_PAT30264_EYE_SCREENING_MO0029_MID

Imagine being three again. Life is a bountiful display, a feast for the eyes, a world of color worth getting lost in. Now imagine that being taken away, replaced only by darkness. That's what children with cataracts experience, and that's what the *Africa Mercy* eye team and our partners here in Benin are helping reverse – starting now.

Patient Update



BEE161130_BEE161019_VERONIQUE_PAT08399_DISCHARGE_MO0004_MID

“When my pastor sees me, he’ll be jumping for joy!” says Veronique the day she heads home from the *Africa Mercy*. “He prayed for me [for six years]!” Now her tumor is finally gone.



BEE170103_SAIDOU_PAT09003_SCREENING_DOCK_MO0008_MID

"When I first sat down across from Saidou, I could feel my stomach contract. I imagined what it would be like, having the skin of my neck fused to my face, having only a small 'o' shape for a mouth, and having strangers cringe at my burned and mottled skin.

Before I might have looked away in helpless pity, but now instead, my first reaction was to offer up a prayer of thanks....he would get surgery."

-One Africa Mercy volunteer recounting her thoughts upon meeting Saidou for the first time.

The 11-year old suffered severe burns three years ago when strong winds blew a campfire out of control.



BEE161110_CONCEPTIA_PAT05029_SCREENING_MO0004_MID

Loss is all too familiar for 4-year old Conceptia and her mom. Her father passed away and so did two of her brothers. Her legs are bent in a way that makes it difficult to walk. Hardship continued when her mom lost her job. Still, they found a way to reach Mercy Ships, hoping for something to go right. And it did. Conceptia was approved for surgery to fix her legs and help her walk. Soon, she and her mom will have something to smile about.

Photographer's Picks



BEE161124_VALERIE_PAT08035_HOME_VISIT_JF0004_MID

Beautiful fabrics abound in Benin. Tailors can be found on just about every street corner, set up in little booths or store fronts, ready to measure, cut and create unique African designs. Colorful and fun is the best way to describe it!

– *Justine Forrest, Africa Mercy Photographer*

Did You Know...?



BEE161221_DIVINE_SIBLING_MOTHER_MO0003_MID

Moms. Brothers. Aunties. Friends. These are the caretakers of our patients. Coming alongside as advocates, they've gone to great lengths to make sure they're loved ones get help. They make the long journey to stand in even longer lines, all the while praying for a "yes" to free surgery. They carry bags in arms and babies on backs up the gangway of the ship. They wait during surgery, and hold hands during pain. They wipe tears, encourage spirits, and quiet fears. These caretakers are integral part of the healing process, making free surgery on the *Africa Mercy* a priority for their family.

Prayer Points



BEE170111_EYE_SCREENING_MO0011_MID

The eye program is underway as cataract surgeries are performed to restore sight to our eye patients. Screening continues as new patients are examined and approved for surgery in the weeks and months to come. Please pray for peace among those waiting in line. Pray for guidance and direction for the specialists as they provide treatment. And as our new patients begin to see again, pray that their new-found vision reveals truth within their hearts, souls and minds. Finally, please pray for those holding the hands of our eye patients and guiding them to new territories - that they, too, would find faith and hope in the transformative miracles they witness.

Crew Bio: Angie Browne (GBR): Galley Team Lead



BEE161201_COM392_ANGIE_BROWNE_GBR_JF0011_MID

Meet Angie, from Manchester, England. It's no surprise that she loves tea, which she refers to as "cuppa." Fortunately on the *Africa Mercy*, there's plenty of "cuppas" to go around. But even without it (which she doesn't recommend), Angie has what seems like an unending supply of energy and wit – a winning combo for someone who interacts with nearly *every* crew member, almost *every* day!

Working in the Food Services department, Angie is one of two Dining Room Team Leads on board the *Africa Mercy*, a floating hospital ship - and home to 400 crew from around the world and 200 local crew from the host country (currently Benin). It takes all of these volunteer jobs in order for Mercy Ships to deliver free surgery to people in poor nations. And these volunteers need to eat. So, Angie and the Dining Room teams partner with the Galley teams to serve around 1500 meals per day, making sure everyone is "fed up" (in a good way), so the ship can truly *operate* - in every sense of the word.

"I was never really driven by the idea of making loads of money," says Angie, thinking back to her plans after college. Having graduated from university in the United Kingdom with a degree in Leisure Studies, Angie was passionate about helping people from poor areas.

After college, Angie met some missionaries in her church and traveled to Malaysia for six weeks on a mission trip. She loved every moment. When she returned home, she looked through a short-term mission directory with offices in the UK. "I just flicked through the brochure and said 'that looks like so much fun!'" she says, recalling how she came across Mercy Ships. She applied to volunteer and about a week later, was offered a job as a cook on board the *Anastasis* for three months. "My parents were away at the time, so I left them a note: 'Went to South Africa – see you in three months!'" she remembers, smirking.

"I didn't know much about the organization, but was about to learn," says Angie. After boarding the ship and speaking to people first-hand, she began to develop a deeper understanding about what it's like to

serve the world's forgotten poor. She grew to appreciate the need for medical professionals, as well as the need for many other positions, like cooks.

Angie must love cooking, right? Guess again...“I actually don't really enjoy cooking. What I really love is organizing, problem solving, and the challenge of having the food ready to be served despite whatever might come our way. Food is everyone's business and it's important to the morale of the crew that they can feel comfortable and at home in the dining room.”

Now, as she returns to Mercy Ships for her third time, Angie feels she is exactly where she should be: “I know that God is always tinkering in my life – and He does a good job!”

We're looking for more people like Angie to be a part of our crew at Mercy Ships! Visit www.mercyships.org/volunteer to search available openings today!