



Claudia Juarez with Mercy Ships

May 2010

Just a Stick

Then the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" "A staff," he replied. Exodus 4:2

It was just a stick... an ordinary stick. It had fallen from the tree many years before. It had spent years in the desert heat and become dry and hard. Moses had picked it up one day years before and had begun using it as a staff to steady him when he walked about, to guide the sheep in the right way, to ward off the predators. It had become smooth with use. But it was just a stick ... an ordinary stick ... until that day at the burning bush.

Did the stick change that day? Would it be the agent of miracles if not in the hand of Moses? Would it be the agent of miracles, even in Moses' hand, if God did not command it? What made it special? The miracles that resulted when it was used in the name of God. Why did the miracles happen? Because Moses heard and believed God and used his staff just as God told him.

I'm like that stick (sort of!). I'm just an ordinary person. My life experiences and training have prepared me for the opportunity God has now set before me to serve with Mercy Ships. But though I'm ready and willing, I can't get there and utilize my training and skills unless someone (you!) helps me get there and stay there. I hope you will consider being an ongoing supporter and help take/send me to where I can be an instrument in God's hand.



Bound for Togo!

Early next month I expect to be on my way to Lome, Togo to serve for two months on the *Africa Mercy!* Over the last few months I have been preparing for this opportunity, and the opportunity to continue that service next year in Sierra Leone when I begin a period of full-time service with Mercy Ships. Selling my car and many of my personal possessions, moving out of my apartment, resigning my job here in Atlanta and helping interview, choose, and train my replacement, purchasing my plane ticket to Lome....

Your prayers are appreciated as I travel to and from Togo, and as I serve on board the *Africa Mercy*. My scheduled travel dates are:

- Friday, June 4 - Saturday, June 5 fly from Atlanta to Lome via Paris
- Saturday, July 31 - Sunday, August 1 fly from Lome to Atlanta via Paris

Continue to keep me in your prayers during my service aboard the *Africa Mercy*. The time is sure to bring lots of physical, emotional, professional, and even spiritual challenges, along with great blessings.

And, finally, pray for my future plans for service with Mercy Ships, including attending the GATEWAY training program in September, and the availability of sufficient funds for ongoing service.

I am so blessed to have so many encouragers in my life. Thank you all so much!





Stories from the Field...

Oscar—A New Smile

Cleft lip and palate abnormalities occur in approximately 1 in 700 live births. In developed countries, children typically receive corrective surgery before 18 months of age. Many medical professionals are involved in the child's care – including surgeons, dentists, audiologists (hearing specialists), and speech therapists.

Oscar had a cleft lip that remained unrepaired for ten years. He was born in West Africa, where a cleft abnormality can be a life-threatening condition. It is commonly believed that people with clefts are possessed by evil spirits. They are often discarded or abandoned by their families and communities.

“When Oscar was born, some people thought the child was a bad spirit and said I should abandon him,” Oscar’s mother, Florentine, said. “I thought he would die because I could not take care of him. I was scared I would not be able to feed him. But others encouraged me to try, so I gave everything to God. I trusted Him to help me take care of Oscar.”

Florentine succeeded in meeting Oscar’s physical needs, but she could not protect him from emotional pain and rejection. “The other kids would tease and insult me. When they teased me, I felt very bad,” said Oscar. “Kids teased him to the point where he didn’t want to go to school,” added Florentine. “For a while, he stopped going. I felt a very, very big pain in my heart when people teased him.”

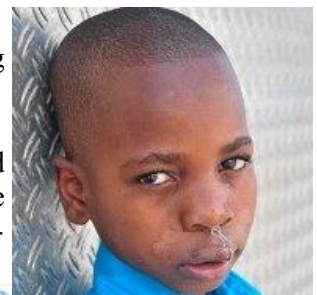
While living in Côte d'Ivoire, Florentine’s husband heard the Africa Mercy was performing free surgeries in Benin. At first, he was skeptical. But after further inquires, he realized it was true; there really was a hospital ship performing free surgeries. He sent Florentine and Oscar to meet the ship in Benin. Florentine, originally from Benin, remained skeptical. “Before I came to the ship, I was quarreling with my husband, saying, ‘No, because it’s a ship, because it’s free, it cannot be real.’ I was worried and scared,” she said.

But when they came to the Africa Mercy, Florentine’s fears were relieved. What her husband had heard was actually true. Oscar received a free surgery and now has a restored smile. He no longer has to worry about being teased at school. “I am very happy now. I will tell the other kids at school what God has done for me,” said Oscar.



Florentine is very grateful to everyone who helped in bringing healing to her son.

“I am very happy; I cannot say enough. I hope that God blesses the nurses and the doctors for the work they have done. They have done a very great job for me and others. Thank you very much.”




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Financial Support

I serve as a volunteer and am reliant on the support of others for all of my expenses. If you are led to share in my ministry financially, please make checks payable to Mercy Ships and send to: Mercy Ships, Donor Services, P.O. Box 2020, Lindale, TX 75771 with a note designating for the support of missionary Claudia Juarez (#2793). Or, you can make a contribution online at: <https://connect.mercyships.org/page/outreach/view/crewmates/juarezc>

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