

On Land and Sea

Update – March 14, 2011

We've Arrived!

After 13 days of sailing from Capetown, South Africa, crossing the prime meridian back into the western hemisphere and the equator back into the northern hemisphere, we arrived in Freetown, Sierra Leone on the morning of Sunday, February 27! There was a nice turnout of those waiting to greet us on the dock. The Minister of Health gave a welcoming speech and came aboard for a brief visit. Later the 50+ crewmembers awaiting our arrival were able to come aboard to their new home. In the last two weeks since our arrival we have nearly doubled our population onboard the *Africa Mercy*!



During our first week in port we were very busy unpacking all the tied-down instruments and supplies and cleaning the hospital deck. In the lab we had two engineers come in to set up and perform maintenance and calibrations on some of our instruments. From one of them we all received certificates for our training time!



Monday, March 7 was our big screening event at the National Stadium in Freetown. This involved almost everyone on the ship in some capacity. We began leaving the ship in shifts beginning at 4am to get set up at the stadium. I was in a group leaving around 5:30am. When we arrived at the stadium it was still dark, but by a few lights set up from a generator and some flashlights we began setting up the various screening stations in the rooms of the stadium. By 8am we began screening the people who had come in hopes that we would be able to help them. Our medical mission is primarily surgical and there are particular types of surgery we are set up to perform, but many of those who come have

non-surgical issues or need types of surgery we cannot accommodate. However, every effort is made to refer those we cannot help to someone who can help them and each one is counseled and prayed with.

The day began with much excitement and anticipation, but it ended with tragedy and disappointment. Large crowds are always a feature at these mass screening events. There are often some minor incidents of frustration or exhaustion in the waiting crowds. However, on Monday many issues came to a head, likely with the help of some agitators in the crowd, and the crowds stormed at the gates of the stadium resulting in several people being trampled and one person dying despite the efforts of some of our crew members who administered CPR for over half an hour. It was the type of situation in which it was impossible to restore order, and our crew (none of whom were among those injured) was withdrawn from the site. Our hearts are heavy for those injured, but also for those who waited many hours and came from far away to seek help. **Pray with us that those who can and should benefit from the surgical services we can offer will be able to make their way to one of our smaller screening opportunities.**

Africa Mercy Hospital Open House

On Wednesday evening the *Africa Mercy* hospital was opened up to the whole crew with lots of activities, games, and fun! In the lab we checked people's blood types and showed off our CoolScope through which a pathologist in the UK can evaluate stained slides placed on the 'scope here in Africa.



Surgery began today, but other programs such as the dental and eye programs are also already beginning their outreaches. Please keep all of our crew in your prayers as well as those to whom they have come to minister.

God bless! Keep in touch!

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Note: If you'd prefer not to receive these updates, rather get them at a different email address, or know of someone else who'd like to receive them, just let me know! Feel free to pass this on to others who might be interested, too.

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/juarez>