



## Update – October 30, 2011

### Catching up

It's hard to believe it is almost the end of October. I've been back to the *Africa Mercy* for over 10 months and our service in Sierra Leone will soon be coming to an end with only a few more weeks of surgery to go. September was a particularly busy month for me in large part because my last fellow tech left during the first week and replacements did not arrive until early this month so it was just me to cover the lab work (though fortunately I did have a phlebotomist working with me). At the same time the lab workload picked up significantly; September was the second highest month for transfusions and one of the highest for total lab tests. But help has arrived and the lab is fully staffed again!

The rainy season here is coming to an end and though there's still an occasional shower, the days are becoming more sunny and clear so that outdoor activities can be planned and enjoyed. I hope to get out a bit over the next few weeks before we depart for Ghana (a stopover of a few weeks in route to our next outreach location in Togo).

### Come see the *Africa Mercy* for yourself

So, you've read these newsletters, seen some pictures, talked to me or others who have served with Mercy Ships. Wouldn't you like to come and experience it for yourself? Well, you can! There are several ways to do that:

- 1. Become a volunteer crew member yourself.** We're a hospital ship, but we're also a community and we need people with all sorts of skills to join us. There is a list of typical positions on the Mercy Ships website at <http://www.mercyships.org/pages/faq-typical-positions>. Commitment time ranges from 2 weeks to 2 years depending on the position.
- 2. Come as part of a Mercy Team.** Mercy Teams can come to W. Africa and serve alongside the *Africa Mercy*. They may work on projects on the ship, off the ship, or in coordination with other local ministries. Get 2 or more people together who are interested in serving a week or two and then contact Mercy Ships for the applications and coordination. Find out more about Mercy Teams at <http://www.mercyships.org/index.php/pages/mercy-team>.
- 3. Vacation in W. African and come see the ship as a visitor.** If you are "in town" and would like to visit the ship, this can be arranged. Generally visitors come on Sunday afternoons and join us for dinner and our Sunday worship service.
- 4. Be my guest!** As a long-term crew member I can have guests come and stay onboard the ship for up to a week. Since there are a limited number of guest cabins this has to be coordinated with our hospitality department. So if you'd like to come and really see the ship, but have a limited time to commit let me know!

### A Story of Transformation

The villagers called Abdul the "devil child" because of his deformed, curling feet. He was abandoned by his mother, but his father, Simeon, stood by his side. He knew that the baby's condition was medical. It was not a case of witchcraft.

Abdul played with the neighborhood children who taunted him until he hid in the house, sobbing from the pain of rejection. When Abdul started attending school, he proved to be a very curious child and a quick learner, and he enjoyed his father's support of his education.

Simeon had a strong faith in God and firmly believed that one day, Abdul would be healed. One day, a radio jingle announced the arrival of Mercy Ships to assess people for surgery. Abdul and his father stood in line for an exhausting three days to be seen. It was worth every second when Abdul was accepted for treatment. "The joy I felt was so overwhelming I lost my appetite to eat until I arrived at Mercy Ships," Simeon recalls.

Abdul's first Ponsetti treatment involved the application of heavy plaster casts to his legs to correct the position of his curled feet. The thigh-high casts positioned his legs in 90-degree right angles. Abdul was required to stay in a permanent "squat" position for several months. But Abdul's mischievous spirit emerged, and he cunningly mastered walking like a spider.

Abdul dreaded the cast changes. It was a lengthy procedure – but, in time, he formed endearing friendships with the physiotherapy team. Finally, after many cast changes, Abdul was ready for the surgery to make his curled feet flat. A few days after his successful surgery and fitted with straight, short leg casts which made walking easier, Abdul joyfully hobbled around on crutches with the other boys who were receiving similar treatment on their legs. He was encouraged as they practiced walking together by playing competitive games. A delighted Abdul beamed, "I am happy because I can walk to school when I go home."



Physiotherapist Nick was overjoyed with the boy's progress and said, "Abdul is very special. I'm very proud of him. His first few steps were like a newborn calf, but now he's walking with confidence. His future will be worlds apart from what it would have been before treatment – he would have been begging on the streets. Now, he will work, contributing to society, which gives him a bright future."

Brimming with confidence for their future, his father waved goodbye and declared, "His faith has grown stronger and stronger as his legs healed. Now he's ready to grow into a great man that we will love and respect!"



## Mercy Ships Videos

There are many Mercy Ships videos available both on the Mercy Ships website ([www.mercyships.org](http://www.mercyships.org)) and on YouTube. On YouTube there is a Mercy Ships channel with many videos of various aspects of the Mercy Ships ministries.

In a few of the recent videos, if you don't blink, you can catch a glimpse of me as I serve the lab onboard the *Africa Mercy*.

Connections October 2011: <http://youtu.be/L6CiRhNPnwk>

Connections July 2011: <http://youtu.be/mY33uXx5KQ0>

Mercy in Action: [http://youtu.be/qu73D\\_VCB1w](http://youtu.be/qu73D_VCB1w)

Blessings!

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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:*

<http://mercyships-us.donorpages.com/crewmates/juarezc/>