

# Mercy Ships Fact Sheet

## About Mercy Ships

Mercy Ships is an international faith-based organisation, with a mission to increase access to health care throughout the world. Through the deployment of the world's largest, private hospital ship, the *Africa Mercy*, Mercy Ships works with host nations to help fill the gaps in health care systems, while serving the dire and immediate needs of their population. Mercy Ships provides a variety of training opportunities for medical professionals (surgeons, nurses, anesthesia providers, administrators and community health workers), along with curative surgical interventions. Collaborating with qualified local and international partners, Mercy Ships programs offer holistic support to developing nations striving to make health care accessible for all. Since 1978, Mercy Ships delivered services to more than 2.5 million direct beneficiaries. The countries served by Mercy Ships are ranked as the poorest in the world by the United Nations Human Development Index.

The organisation has supported its hospital ships through:

- 1) **The International Operations Center** in Garden Valley, Texas USA (home of both the **US national office** and **Mercy Ships Operations** which includes: marine operations, principle human resources, warehousing, logistics, IT and training location).
- 2) **Mercy Ships Global Association** headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland (international coordination).
- 3) **Mercy Ships national offices** in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Norway, New Zealand, Spain, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, The United Kingdom, and the USA.

## Founder & History

While living in Lausanne, Switzerland, Don Stephens began a journey that led to the founding of Mercy Ships. Don formed and led a team that surveyed suitable ocean liners for the dream of a hospital ship to serve the world's poor. In 1978, the dream became a reality with the purchase of the first ship, the *Anastasis*. Another milestone was reached in 2007 with the launching of the *Africa Mercy*, the largest of the four hospital ships operated by our organisation in its 35-year history.

Don and his wife Deyon and their four children lived onboard the first Mercy Ship for 10 years. Now based in the USA, the Stephens have overseen the growth of Mercy Ships from its humble beginnings to an organisation that has in its history had tens of thousands of professional volunteers. Don serves on the 37-member Mercy Ships International Board with members from 13 nations.

## Ships and Field Programs

### Vessels & Locations

With offices in 16 nations, Mercy Ships operates hospital ships serving some of the poorest developing nations of the world. The *Africa Mercy* is the world's largest non-governmental hospital ship and is dedicated to the continent of Africa. The success of the *Africa Mercy* project gives us confidence to further expand our fleet (in the coming years). Mercy Ships has over 1,600 volunteers helping in locations around the world which includes over 900 volunteer crew serving in Africa from over 40 nations.

### Programs & Services

Mercy Ships programs promote health and well-being by empowering developing nations through capacity building and by meeting the urgent surgical needs of the world's forgotten poor. Mercy Ships has provided services and materials in developing nations valued at over \$1.2 billion, including the following:

- Performed more than 78,000 life-changing operations such as cleft lip and palate repair, cataract removal, orthopaedic procedures, facial reconstruction and obstetric fistula repair.
- Treated over 183,000 dental patients including over 353,000 dental procedures.
- Trained more than 5,800 local teachers who have in turn trained many others.
- Trained over 35,300 local professionals in their area of expertise (anesthesiology, midwifery, sterilisation, orthopaedic and reconstructive surgery, leadership)
- Taught over 183,000 local people in basic health care.
- Completed over 1,100 community development projects focusing on water and sanitation, education, infrastructure development and agriculture.

### Finances

Funding for Mercy Ships is provided primarily through private donations. Volunteers serving on the ships and field contribute monthly fees, enabling Mercy Ships to deliver medical and development services for a fraction of the usual cost.



Ali, Sierra Leone  
Cleft Lip Repair



Maomai, Benin  
Tumor Removal



Alexis, Nadège, Ricardo,  
Benin, Cataract Removal



Floating Hospitals



Surgeries & Health Care



Training of local professionals



Community Empowerment

*Lives  
transformed  
through hope  
and healing...*

Images, case studies and additional information about Mercy Ships can be found online at [www.mercyships.org](http://www.mercyships.org)

