

# Mercy Ships Fact Sheet

## About Mercy Ships



Ali, Sierra Leone  
Cleft Lip Repair



Maomai, Benin  
Tumor Removal



Alexis, Nadège, Ricardo,  
Benin, Cataract Removal

Mercy Ships is an international faith-based organization bringing hope and healing to the world's forgotten poor. As many as 5 billion people lack access to safe, affordable surgical and anesthesia services worldwide, and less than 6% of all operations are delivered to the world's poorest countries. Marginalized populations continue to suffer due to a lack of trained healthcare providers, inadequate infrastructure, and disproportionate out-of-pocket healthcare costs. Mercy Ships programs offer holistic support to developing nations striving to make healthcare accessible for all. Since 1978, Mercy Ships delivered services to more than 2.56 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 organization 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**) This location houses executive offices, marine operations, human resources, warehousing, finance, logistics, and information services.
- 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 Mercy Ships in its 38-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, Don continues to inspire the staff and crew toward the future. Stephens have overseen the growth of Mercy Ships from its humble beginnings to an organization that has in its history had tens of thousands of professional volunteers. Don serves on the 36-member Mercy Ships International Board with members from 14 nations.

## Ships and Field Programs

The *Africa Mercy* is the world's largest non-governmental hospital ship and is dedicated to the continent of Africa. Mercy Ships has an average of 1000 volunteer crew, from up to 40 nations, serving onboard the *Africa Mercy* each year.

## Programs & Services

Mercy Ships works with host nations to strengthen the local healthcare delivery system while serving the surgical needs of the host country. Mercy Ships also provides a variety of training opportunities for medical professionals (surgeons, nurses, anesthesia providers, administrators and community health workers). Collaborating with qualified local and international partners, Mercy Ships programs offer holistic support to developing nations. Mercy Ships has provided services and materials in developing nations valued at over \$1.3 billion, including the following:

- Performed more than 82,000 life-changing or life-saving operations such as cleft lip and palate repair, cataract removal, orthopedic procedures, facial reconstruction and obstetric fistula repair
- Treated over 147,000 dental patients including over 390,000 dental procedures
- Trained more than 5,900 local professionals (including surgeons) who have in turn trained many others
- Trained over 38,100 local professionals in their area of expertise (anesthesiology, midwifery, sterilization, orthopedic and reconstructive surgery, leadership)
- Taught over 198,000 local people in basic healthcare
- Completed over 1,100 infrastructure development and agriculture projects

## Finances

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



Floating Hospitals



Surgery and Healthcare



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)

