

# Introducing Christine Hartley



**Mercy Ships has appointed its first Community Fundraiser in the South West region as part of its commitment to developing the charity across the UK.**

Christine Hartley, who lives in Ivybridge with her husband and two teenage children, joined Mercy Ships in December with more than six years experience in the fundraising sector.

Christine will help to raise the profile of Mercy Ships, working with volunteers across areas such as Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Bristol.

Prior to her last post as Regional Fundraising Manager for the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign, Christine was Community Fundraiser for the UK's leading children's charity, Barnardo's.

Speaking about her appointment, Christine said: "I had been looking for a position with Mercy Ships since speaking to a volunteer at a Rotary conference several years ago. It was an organisation that made me sit up and think wow; they do fantastic work and are a very worthy charity. I was highly impressed with people that gave their time to support those in need in our world."

*"New arrival was delighted when the position of community fundraiser South West was advertised, and even more delighted to be offered the position. Much of my experience is within schools and the community, both of which I am looking forward to working closely with over the coming years."*

Judy Potkinhorn, Executive Director of Mercy Ships UK, said: "We are delighted to have Christine on board and her experience in the charity sector is invaluable to us. We have always had tremendous support in the South West and we are committed to growing that support over the coming years."

## Mercy Ships UK

Spring 2010

# Bulletin



# Welcome



## After a cold and snowy start to the year I welcome you all to the Mercy Ships UK Spring Bulletin for 2010.

First I would like to say that though like many charities in the UK 2009 was a tough year for fundraising, we were blessed with amazing donations, gifts in kind, and support from everyone. We are enormously grateful for those who continue to support us regularly, and those new supporters who have started to support the services we offer to those so much in need.

I hope you will enjoy catching up on the 2009 Benin field service, and look forward, with us, to the work we shall be doing with the people of Togo in 2010. Access to health care in West Africa remains substandard and nowhere is this more true than in Togo. There, an estimated 70% of the population live on less than £2 a day. From these figures you can see why your support is so much needed to make a difference to the lives of so many.

This is an exciting time for us here in the UK as Donovan and Mae Palmer and family (adopted Brits!) take up their role, once again, of leadership on the Africa Mercy, as Managing Director and Administrative Assistant. We know that you will join with all of us in wishing them every blessing. They will be following Ken and Ann Berry who have been strong in leadership of the Africa Mercy and great friends of all here in the UK. Ken goes to take up a post at the IOC in Texas. You will find a contribution from Donovan inside this edition.

We also feature one of our Board of Trustees, Henry Clarke, our Company Secretary; supply you with a poster on the reverse of the Bulletin with our events diary; and introduce you to Christine Hartley, our new Community Fundraiser for the South West. So lots to keep you truly involved.

Once again on behalf of the Board and Staff I thank you for your ongoing friendship and huge support.

God Bless,

Judy Polkinhorn (Mrs)  
Executive Director Mercy Ships UK  
Vice President National Offices  
Mercy Ships International

## Looking back: Benin 2009



December marked the end of the 2009 Mercy Ships Field Service in Benin. Ten months of patient screening, back to back surgeries, and non-stop capacity building efforts resulted in record results.

Due to the combined efforts of 454 crew members from over 40 nations, and the support of our state-of-the-art hospital ship, 97,625 total procedures were performed and 67,219 lives impacted as direct beneficiaries.

The Africa Mercy leaves behind permanent footprints in Benin – footprints in the form of trained eye surgeons who can now perform eye screenings and cataract removals. Not only can these physicians treat people in their own communities but they are trained to teach other physicians long after the ship is gone.

*The country of Benin will have healthier children, due to the Mercy Ships partnerships with the IMCI programme that educates families on wound tending and cleaning.*

The Biomedical Training programme educated individuals on how to keep local hospital equipment fine tuned and updated so that hospitals can run as efficiently as possible.

The Food for Life programme will enable communities to grow their own crops, and the dormitory constructed in the Hévié area outside of Cotonou, will now be the base for agricultural trainers, educated by Mercy Ships, to train others long into the future.

These footprints will leave a lasting impact, but perhaps the most valuable measure of success can be found in the hope and healing provided one life at a time, through over 4,000 eyes surgeries, 231 orthopaedic surgeries, 154 fistula surgeries, and more than 2,000 general and reconstructive surgeries.

# Looking forward: Togo 2010



**Hundreds of well-wishers lined up to welcome the Africa Mercy hospital ship and her crew into the Port City of Lomé, Togo, to begin a six-month assignment in the country.**

This is the fourth visit by a Mercy Ship to Togo in the past twenty years. The West African nation of Togo ranks among the world poorest countries – currently 159th out of 182 nations tracked by the 2009 Human Development Index. Access to health care is inadequate or unaffordable. Out of every 1,000 live births, 140 children will die before the age of five, life expectancy is only 58 years, and there is only one doctor for every 28,500 people.

During the hospital ship's six-month assignment in port, hundreds of volunteers from around the world will carry out a wide range of medical and community development services.

Surgeries to be offered by Mercy Ships include maxillo-facial, cleft lip and palate, tumours, flesh-eating noma, cataracts, obstetric fistula, and orthopaedic cases.

*Within the ship's six state-of-the-art operating theatres, specialist volunteers will provide free services including over 350 specialised surgeries for patients affected by maxillofacial deformities such as tumours, injuries, infections, and cleft lip and palate.*

The Mercy Vision project aims to help reduce the number of blind people in Togo, and will provide over 1,500 specialised surgeries to correct blindness due to cataracts, as well as over 100 surgeries to correct blindness due to pterygium.

Off ship teams will also set up dental clinics in local communities to treat over 5,000 people affected by tooth decay, infections of the mouth, and small oral lesions.

All services are offered at no charge to patients, thanks mostly to the many donors who support the ongoing work of Mercy Ships.

## Saved from suffocation



Baby Maomai was born with a cervical teratoma that had developed into a huge growth protruding from her neck. It started out the size of a golf ball, but after three months the tumour was almost as large as the baby's head.

Maomai's mother, Perlagie, and her husband naturally sought help for their daughter. They took her to a local hospital, but no surgeon was available to operate.

After a family member heard about the Africa Mercy docked in their country, Perlagie brought her daughter to the floating hospital. Seeing the urgency, our medical team prepared Maomai for surgery straight away.

But the tumour had made it difficult for her to feed, and Maomai was too underweight to undergo an operation. The Mercy Ships medical team placed her on a feeding programme, postponing surgery for one month.



The day arrived for the operation. It took six hours to remove the tumour, which weighed 375 grams – 15% of her body weight.

Maomai spent over a month recovering in our wards, being fed through a tube to help her regain weight. Since her operation she has grown steadily and gained in vibrancy.

*She is a real life example of how donor support works. Had it not been for the generosity of people who haven't even met her, she would have been condemned to a very uncertain future.*

# Volunteer life



## Donovan Palmer, Managing Director, Africa Mercy

Donovan grew up in Colorado, and after studying Business Management and Computer Science, moved to Amsterdam with his newly married wife Mae, to work with Youth with a Mission's International Operations Office. During his tenure in Amsterdam, Donovan became involved with humanitarian aid projects in Central Asia. It was these projects that sparked his interest in seeing a Mercy Ship launched out of the UK.

In 1997, Donovan helped write the first Business Plan for this ship, then assisted with the purchase of the Dronning Ingrid (now renamed the Africa Mercy). For five years he oversaw the ship's conversion in Newcastle upon Tyne for the work it would perform in the future.

For the past five years Donovan has served as Chief Executive for Youth with a Mission England, overseeing their 300 staff in 21 locations.

*Now joined by his wife Mae, and their three children, all born in the UK, Donovan says goodbye to the UK, after seventeen years here, to go and join the Africa Mercy as Managing Director at the start of the Togo Field Service in 2010.*

His service with Mercy Ships has come full circle and he rejoins the ship he helped prepare for service – now active in Africa serving the needs of those so much in need.

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# Trustee talk



**Henry Clarke says: "You don't have to be a doctor, surgeon, ship's captain or marine engineer to be caught up in the exhilaration of serving with Mercy Ships! I am none of these... but it was the compelling and compassionate work of this extraordinary ministry of hope and healing that caught my imagination way back in 1978 when the first ship of mercy, the M/V Anastasis, was acquired through a massive step of faith and after much prayer.**

Fourteen years ago I made a commitment to Mercy Ships, which I know I shall never regret, to take up an invitation to become one of the founding Trustees of Mercy Ships UK. Since then I have had the privilege of contributing my time and business skills to help advance the cause of Mercy Ships. As Company Secretary I have the responsibility for legal compliance and governance issues regarding the charity, which some may consider rather boring and incidental, but is essential for the effectiveness of the work we do for Mercy Ships here in the UK.

It has been a delight to witness the growth of Mercy Ships and for me to have had some small part to play in assisting the vision of the Africa Mercy project become a wonderful reality. In this one project alone I have seen God's hand of provision on Mercy Ships in ways that could not be imagined.

*I am continually amazed at the passion, dedication and zeal of those who give their time and talents to further the work of Mercy Ships in whatever ways they can. The task of bringing hope and healing to the poorest of the poor continues to be enormous, seemingly never ending, but Mercy Ships is full of so many stories of God's faithfulness that you cannot be but challenged to press on and see even more lives changed and renewed"*