

Mercy Ships

Mercy Ships is an international charity that was founded in 1978 by Don and Deyon Stephens. Mercy Ships currently operates the largest non-governmental hospital ship in the world, providing free healthcare, community development projects, community health education, mental health programmes, agriculture projects, and palliative care for terminally ill patients.

Mercy Ships has operated in more than 70 developing nations around the world, with a current focus on the countries of West Africa. The organisation has its International Operations Center (IOC) in Garden Valley, Texas. Mercy Ships also has 16 national resource offices in countries that include

Spain, Britain, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, South Africa and Australia.

A major inspiration for Mercy Ships Founder and President Don Stephens was the work of the international hospital ship SS Hope. Stephens' research showed that 95 of the 100 largest cities in the world were port cities. Therefore, a hospital ship could deliver healthcare very efficiently to large numbers of people. The birth of Stephens' profoundly disabled son, John Paul, also inspired him to move forward with his vision of a floating hospital. A visit with Mother Teresa in Calcutta, India, further deepened his commitment to serving the world's neediest people.

Mercy Ships currently has one vessel in service: the 16,500-ton

flagship Africa Mercy, which measures almost 500 feet long. The Africa Mercy has greater capacity than all three previous Mercy Ships combined.

The Africa Mercy is currently serving in the port of Conakry, Guinea, where its field service will last from August 2012 to May 2013. The ship was previously docked in Lomé, Togo, for the first months of its 2012 field service. The Africa Mercy docked in Freetown, Sierra Leone for its 2011 field service, which lasted for 10 months. At the conclusion of each field service, the Africa Mercy goes into dry dock, where it is resupplied and receives any needed repairs or upgrades before heading to its next port of call.

Source: Internet

professionals. These teams will perform or assist in life-changing surgeries. The Rotarian - volunteers will also work to enhance the skills of local healthcare professionals.

The healthcare project was initiated by RI District 3140 and the team of Rotarian and non-Rotarian doctors from India had a satisfying experience of serving the ailing people of Conakry, Guinea. Conakry is the capital of Guinea. This port city has almost a quarter of the population of the country. On April 20, 2013, the team of eye surgeons left Mumbai on a mission under Rotary's Packaged Global Grants programme to provide eye related treatment to the needy and train local doctors to carry on with planned activities. Vocational Training Team was specially formed to deliver service in the eye-care sector to the West African country, Guinea with the object of providing cataract surgeries and capacity building of eye surgeons in that country which has a severe shortage



Demonstration of eye-surgery using latest technology.

of qualified eye surgeons. This project was funded to the extent of US \$39,000 by The Rotary Foundation under the

Packaged Global Grant. This is the second such grant given by The Rotary Foundation to work side by side along