

Lives transformed
through
hope and healing...

Mercy Ships Overview



About Mercy Ships

Mercy Ships is a global charity that provides medical relief, training, and sustainable development to areas of natural disaster or chronic need. The ocean-going vessels in the fleet bring hope and healing to the world's most needy. Mercy Ships has provided specialized surgeries, dental care, medical supplies, development training, clothing, construction materials, and a message of hope to 90 port districts worldwide.

Founder & History

In 1977 while living in Lausanne, Switzerland, Don Stephens initiated a process that led to the founding of Mercy Ships. Don formed and led a team that surveyed suitable ocean liners for his dream of a mercy ship to serve the world's poor. On October 5, 1978, the dream became a reality with the purchase of the first ship, the retired ocean liner, *Victoria*, for US \$1 million. Re-christened *Anastasis*, this ship would become a floating hospital ship and serve for 29 more years. Don and his wife, Deyon, and their four children lived onboard for 10 years. Now based out of the International Operations Center in Garden Valley, Texas, the Stephens have overseen the growth of the organization with offices in 15 nations, thousands of professional volunteers, and more than one million direct beneficiaries. Don's newest book, "Ships of Mercy," details this interesting and compelling journey.

Don is one of three inside Directors on the Executive Committee of the 30-member Mercy Ships International Board. Myron Ullman III serves as the Chairman, Lord McColl - Vice Chairman, and William Kanaga - Vice Chairman.

The 522-foot *Anastasis* was the Mercy Ships flag ship for nearly three decades. Acquired in 1978, the former passenger liner was modified to become a state-of-the-art hospital ship, and she completed her first relief mission in 1982 to Guatemala. She and her crew of 400 primarily worked in Africa, performing more than 1,000,000 services with an estimated 1.5 million people as direct beneficiaries. She was decommissioned in July 2007.

Acquired in 1983, the 172-foot *Good Samaritan* served the Caribbean, Central and South America for 11 years with her crew of 60, offering over 145,000 eye and dental services. The ship was renamed the *Island Mercy* in 1994 and redeployed to the South Pacific, where she served until sold in 2001.

Acquired in 1994, the 265-foot *Caribbean Mercy* focused on the Caribbean basin and Central America with its Eye Surgery Unit. The international crew of 150 gave spiritual and physical assistance to the poor and needy. The ship was sold in 2006.

The *Africa Mercy* is a 16,500-ton vessel that underwent an extensive renovation to become a state-of-the-art hospital ship that could serve the nations of Africa. The lower decks of the ship have been converted into a hospital, incorporating six operating theatres, a 78-bed hospital ward, and an Intensive Care Unit. In May 2007, this ship embarked upon her first field service to Monrovia, Liberia.

Our ships have completed over 563 port visits in 53 Developing Nations and 17 Developed Nations. Since 1978, Mercy Ships has performed services valued at \$834 million, impacting 2.9 million people.



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Some of the more notable statistics include:

- Performed more than 56,000 operations such as cleft lip and palate, cataract removal, straightening of crossed eyes, and orthopaedic and facial reconstruction.
- Treated more than 520,000 people in village medical and dental clinics.
- Educated 29,000 local health care workers, who have in turn trained multiple thousands in primary health care.
- Trained local medical professionals in modern health care techniques.
- Completed more than 1,095 construction and agriculture projects.

Target Population

Mercy Ships serves those who are most in need of health care and relief aid in the world's poorest countries. The lack of clean water supplies is among the most urgent problems facing the developing world today. Thousands of children die annually from easily correctable birth defects such as cleft palates and lips. Those who survive become outcasts from society, often rejected by their parents and communities and denied even basic schooling. Half of the world's estimated 40 million blind people could see following a one-hour operation.

Methods

- Life-Changing Operations: Surgeons contribute their services without charge and perform free operations onboard, correcting cleft palates and crossed eyes, and removing tumors and cataracts.
- Village Clinics: Medical and dental teams establish local clinics in outlying villages for the benefit of people who have no access to health care.
- Agricultural Projects: Mercy Ships helps communities become self-sufficient in food production through provision of seeds, tools, and training.
- Clean Water & Sanitation: Mercy Ships provides wells and water pumps, assists with latrine construction, and trains local people in hygiene and sanitation.
- Construction Projects: Mercy Ships partners with — and trains — local people on each project, empowering communities to help themselves.



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