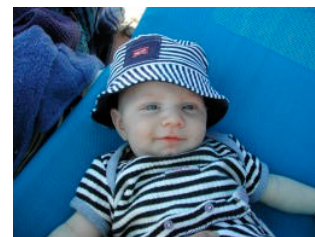




NEWS FROM THE GREGG FAMILY ON BOARD THE ANASTASIS IN SIERRA LEONE.

Dear friends,
 After a hectic summer having a baby, preparing for the ship's visit to Guernsey and packing donations for Mercy Ships, we are back on board the Anastasis. It is good to be back and little Stefan is settling in well to ship life and enjoying all the attention he gets from members of the ship family. This is our second outreach to Sierra Leone and we are docked here in Freetown until March, when we sail to the West African nation of Togo.



SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone is still recovering from a brutal civil war, which resulted in thousands of deaths, amputations and which displaced almost half of the population. Villages and towns were destroyed by the rebel forces and the country's infrastructure has been left in ruins. Sierra Leone is rated the poorest country in the world. It has the lowest life expectancy in the world (45 years) and the highest maternal and infant mortality rate in the world (1 in 5 babies die at birth).

Our medical work

As usual we will be operating on people quality of life is severely diminished by a deformity or past injury. This will include:

- ✂ Maxillo-facial surgeries for cleft lip and tumours
- ✂ Gynaecology – repairs for incontinent women injured during childbirth
- ✂ Orthopaedic reconstruction of limbs and club feet
- ✂ Eye surgeries for cataract, crossed eyes and to remove ugly diseased eyes
- ✂ Plastic surgery to release burn contractures and facial reconstruction for other injuries.

At the beginning of the outreach we have some of the worst cases in our hospital on board, as they will need more than one surgery to improve their deformity. One lady, named Hawa, had a horrific infection as a child which ate away her nose and mouth. She will have a nose formed from a graft from her forehead, her tongue will be temporarily grafted to make the roof of her mouth and skin from her cheeks will be used to form her some lips. A little boy of 13 months is also having his operation this week. He drank caustic soda 3 weeks ago and the resulting chemical burns welded his lips together and scarred the inside of his mouth and cheeks. Another case involves a man injured in the civil war by the rebels who cut off his nose and gouged a large hole in his face.

Mercy Sheeps



Community Development Services

During the civil war the rebels slaughtered the animals, burned the crops and destroyed most of the houses in an area outside Freetown called Molambay.

On our last visit to Sierra Leone a team from the ship trained people from Molambay in carpentry, welding, and plastering and began a house building project. A fishing boat was also repaired and nets purchased to begin a fishing coop. It seemed to follow that our next initiative should be to help the people restock their animal flocks and start their crops again to restore the people's livelihoods.

During the sail to Africa we stopped in the Gambia to pick up 186 sheep and goats for the people of Molambay. In order to qualify for an animal the people had to build a shelter for it and participate in training. They have to give back the 2 firstborn females to the community - for donation to someone else. A Mercy Ships agriculturist has also begun a palm plantation and vegetable gardening project in the area and the house building project is continuing.

Please keep in touch!