

News from the Greggs

Serving with the MV Africa Mercy in Newcastle.

NEWSLETTER NO. 23

23RD SEP 2005

We did it!

Can you believe it! On Sunday 18th September Chris and Vicki (and friend Dave from Guernsey) ran the Great North Run, the world's biggest half marathon, in aid of the Africa Mercy.

After 4 months of blood sweat and tears in training (well almost!), we ran from the city of Newcastle, through Gateshead to South Shields. 13.1 miles in less than 2½ hours, overtaking an estimated 16,000 people on our way!

It was a hard slog and we were very glad when it was over. Hearing about the thousands that couldn't complete the course, and seeing some collapsed at the side of the road as we ran, made us very thankful to God for our health and fitness. It didn't seem like it at the time, but looking back we see it as a real privilege to have been able to run the Great

North Run whilst up here in Newcastle.

We are very pleased to report that through sponsorship for the run, we have been able to raise the whole amount needed to supply all the crew and passengers of the Africa Mercy with lifejackets! This was something we hadn't dared believe was possible but Viking, the lifejacket supplier decided to give Mercy Ships a discount of more than 50% and our supporters were very, very generous. **THANKYOU!**

The total amount raised by ourselves and Dave Russell has now reached over £7000. Any additional funds will go towards other safety equipment for the lifeboats.

The lifejackets are now on order and when they arrive in mid-October we will have a little party for them in order to spray them with the name *MV Africa Mercy*. It will be another step closer to finally sailing away on the new Mercy Ship next year.

If you would like to keep in contact – email: vicki@greggs.org or tel: 0191 483 4277



How's it going on board?

The Africa Mercy is coming on well but it seems painfully slow to the crew waiting 'on shore' for their new home to be completed. Now Mercy Ships is faced less with cash flow problems but more with shipyard delays. We hope that the work can be finished according to schedule and that it is all done well.

In the medical department the hospital is really coming together. We recently took delivery of the CT scanner and it was thrilling to see it unpacked and installed in record time with the help of many crew. Most of the initial floor screed has been laid and now we are awaiting for the laying of the carpet and other flooring around the ship. The furniture is also starting to arrive and is being installed in cabins. We hope to move into our new cabin (aft of deck 5 starboard side) at the end of January.

We also have a crucial issue which is of concern — the volunteer visas of our non EU crew expire on the 30th September and UK Immigration have yet to confirm if they will be able to transfer to Seaman's Visas in order to stay in the UK. This will also effect all new non EU crew intending to arrive in the UK before we sail from this country.

We'll update you as more happens! Don't forget you are always welcome to come and stay with us and have a tour of the ship, we'd love to see you!

Lots of love as always, Vicki and Chris Stefan and Rebekah xx