



news

Hospital ship charity celebrates 30 years of service with return to Liberia

Mercy Ships, the international charity that operates hospital ships in the poorest countries of the world, is celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2008 with a 10-month outreach to Liberia, where it will provide more than 5,000 free surgeries on board the *Africa Mercy* – the world's largest charity hospital ship.

The *Africa Mercy*, purchased for the charity by Ann Gloag OBE, co-founder of the Stagecoach transport group, arrived back in Liberia yesterday following its inaugural outreach to the war-torn country last year.

This year's visit will see Mercy Ships building on the success of its outreach to Liberia last year by providing training to local medical and construction staff, in addition to providing the free surgeries on board.

The President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who mentioned the outstanding work of Mercy Ships in her recent Annual Address to the National Legislature, said: "I am delighted that Mercy Ships has chosen to celebrate its 30th anniversary by helping the people of Liberia. We are working hard to rebuild our country but it takes time and without Mercy Ships, thousands of Liberians would still be waiting for essential medical care and for clean water. Their support is invaluable and the millions of people who have benefitted from their generosity over the years are a lasting legacy."

Whilst the 30th anniversary is a milestone for Mercy Ships, the charity believes the best way to celebrate is to do what it does best and serve the poorest of the poor in Africa.

Over the last 30 years, Mercy Ships has worked in over 70 countries, performed more than 1.5million services and impacted more than 5.5million lives.

The charity has treated more than 300,000 people in village medical clinics, performing 18,000 surgeries, 110,000 dental treatments and completing close to 350 construction and agriculture projects, including schools, clinics, orphanages and water wells.

Professor The Lord McColl of Dulwich, Chairman of Mercy Ships UK and former Professor of Surgery at Guy's Hospital in London, said: "In 30 years Mercy Ships has changed millions of lives for the better and we aim to help millions more in the future."



Volunteer crew member and native Liberian, Oscar Gray, carrying the Liberian flag on arrival at the Port of Monrovia

Photograph Copyright – Mercy Ships International

"I am honoured to be involved with such an amazing charity and to be one of the thousands of volunteers who are the true story behind Mercy Ships. From surgeons to engineers, from cooks to cleaners, people from all over the world give up their time and share their skills for the benefit of those less fortunate than themselves. Mercy Ships' legacy is only possible because of these people."

Judy Polkinhorn, Executive Director of Mercy Ships UK, said: "The conversion of the *Africa Mercy* into a hospital ship took place here in the UK and we were all very proud when she sailed last year to start her service in Africa. Now, we must look to the future and ensure we raise enough funds to keep her afloat off the African coast in order that she can help millions more people over the next 30 years."

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St Michael's neonatal ICU depends on the Siemens RapidLab® 1265 Blood Gas Analyser for critical care testing

The neonatal ICU at St Michael's Hospital, Bristol (part of the United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust) has recently purchased a RapidLab® 1265 Blood Gas analyser from Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics to provide comprehensive critical care testing parameters in an accurate and timely manner.

The RapidLab® 1265 is a high volume, low-maintenance whole blood analyser that offers blood gas, electrolyte, metabolite and full co-oximetry analyses from a single sample. It delivers accurate results in 60 seconds or less, allowing medical staff to make critical decisions at the earliest opportunity.

Neonatal Technician, Bridget Robbins, comments, "The babies we care for often require complex surgical, cardiac and medical intervention. It is vital that our blood gas analyser gives fast and accurate results since ventilator settings, fluids and drug levels are calculated on these results. We find that the Siemens RapidLab® 1265 gives us faster results, which saves staff time and is better for the patients."