

WAVES OF MERCY

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What does it take to leave a legacy?

It doesn't require a spotlight or a grand stage. Sometimes, it starts quietly, with a choice. A moment where you decide that healing should reach further. **That someone you may never meet deserves the chance to live without pain.**

Because you cared, lives have been transformed. People who once faced rejection, fear, or suffering now step into the world with courage — because of you!

Take Musu, whose story is featured in the following pages. Before coming to the ship, Musu lived in the shadows of a condition no one around her could treat. Her future felt uncertain. But then everything changed. Healing found her. Hope found her. **And now, because of your compassion, Musu walks forward with confidence and joy.**



bringing *hope*

In this issue, you'll also meet one of our longest-serving volunteers, Dr. Gary Parker, someone who has given nearly 40 years to this mission. His story is a powerful reminder: **legacies are built one life at a time. One act of compassion at a time.**

You may not be on board our ships, but you are part of this legacy. **With every choice to care, you help bring healing that stretches far beyond today.**

Thank you for being part of this story. The wake you leave is full of hope restored, lives healed, and futures forever changed.

"...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

— Matthew 5:16



and *healing*

From Scars to Strength

Musu | Burn Contracture | Sierra Leone

8-year-old Musu is full of life and always wears an endearing smile on her face. She comes from a small, close-knit village in Sierra Leone, where children grow up laughing and playing together.

It was during one of those playful moments that Musu's carefree childhood took a tragic turn.

Two years ago, her grandmother was boiling palm oil over a wood fire when a boy accidentally pushed little Musu. As she fell, the hot oil spilled over her, causing severe burns that would change her life.

Musu's mother, Mamie, rushed her daughter to the closest hospital — but the medical care available provided little relief. **"They applied some treatments, and we stayed there for three months and six days, but no improvement,"** Mamie remembers.

Still desperate for healing, **they traveled to two more hospitals, spending several more months in treatment but seeing only minor improvements.** Eventually, they returned home — Mamie feeling defeated and Musu still suffering. By this time, Musu's burns had developed into thick scars, leaving her unable to straighten her left arm.





With her arm permanently folded by her side, Musu faced daily physical challenges — simple tasks like doing laundry or fetching water became incredibly difficult. But the emotional pain stung even more. “She likes to play with her friends,” Mamie explained. “But she ends up crying because they laugh at her.” **The name-calling and mockery hurt Musu so much that she stopped attending school.**

Hope seemed out of reach — until one phone call changed everything.

Mamie’s sister excitedly told her about a hospital ship providing free medical care. Mamie was skeptical at first, but her sister reassured her and encouraged her to register Musu quickly. It wasn’t long before Musu was welcomed on board and received surgery to heal her condition. **As she recovered, Musu’s playful spirit shone bright once more.** “She was always helping with the younger children,” recalled Louisa, a volunteer nurse who cared for Musu. “Once, she wore a stethoscope and helped with the rounds. We had a lot of fun!”

When it was time to return home, Mamie was overwhelmed with gratitude. **“We went there with sickness and returned home with joy!”** she said, bursting into song.

Though some of Musu’s physical scars remain, they now tell a story of transformation instead of struggle. No longer limited by her condition, she has returned to school and plays freely with her friends. Musu even dreams of becoming a nurse one day, so she can share the healing she received with others.

This is the legacy of hope — healing and compassion that inspires and impacts generations to come.

A Lifetime of Compassion

40 Years of Changing Lives

How is a legacy created?

For Dr. Gary Parker, it's by stepping into the operating room on a hospital ship — **day after day for 40 years.**

In 1986, Dr. Gary came on board for the first time after hearing about Mercy Ships from a colleague. He signed up to volunteer for just three months — **but after falling in love with our mission, he's still changing lives four decades later!**

"I distinctly remember being inspired by the authenticity of an expression of God's love for the world," Dr. Gary recalls. "That's what attracted me at the beginning, and that's what still attracts me years later."

Dr. Gary met his wife, Susan, on board and together they raised their two children, Carys and Wesley, all while bringing hope and healing to those in need. While Gary focuses on physical care, Susan's role as International Hospital Chaplain is equally important in nurturing the spiritual health of our patients.



Leading a dedicated team of local Christians from the nations we serve, Susan provides compassionate support to patients and families as they navigate their journeys of healing. **"We're working through the emotions and mental outlook, helping them understand that you are a beautiful person no matter what — that you have value and were made in the image of God. It's a long road for people."**

As a maxillofacial surgeon, Dr. Gary treats conditions like cleft lips and facial tumors. He's seen that these

conditions do much more than threaten health and alter appearances — they deeply impact a person's sense of self. With steady hands and impressive skill, **he helps patients reclaim not only their appearance but also their confidence and identity.** And for patients like Sidy, their gratitude goes beyond what words can express.

"...helping them understand...that you have value, and were made in the image of God."

— Susan Parker

A 45-year-old carpenter from Senegal, Sidy spent five months aboard the *Africa Mercy*, receiving three transformative surgeries under Dr. Gary's care. Near the end of his stay, Sidy presented Dr. Gary with a beautiful hand-drawn portrait titled "The King" — **a heartfelt tribute to the man who changed his life forever.**



Yet it's not just Dr. Gary's scalpel that transforms lives — it's the heartfelt compassion he pours into every

interaction. For him, true healing begins long before a patient enters the operating room. It begins the moment they are met with dignity and love. "If someone with a massive tumor still has one good eye, I look in that eye, make contact, and let them know that I see them. That acceptance is, to me, the beginning of their healing."

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— Gary Parker

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But beyond the patients he's healed, Dr. Gary is helping create even more ripples of hope. Through his mentorship of local doctors in the nations we serve, he's equipping communities to provide lifesaving care, long after our ships sail away. By sharing new techniques and healthcare best practices, he's building up a new generation of skilled surgeons — **multiplying hope and healing for years to come.**

“Now we see fewer really big tumors, because we get to them when they're small,” Dr. Gary explains. “And we've been training African surgeons all these years to help with the capacity. We get word from patients' families about how the surgery changed their lives.”



Diagram showing a Bjork flap. [Rep

**Bjork Flap
Tracheostomy**

Dr. Gary's dedication is remarkable — but he's not creating this legacy alone. **It's the encouragement of our partners like you — those who believe in the power of hope — who are equally shaping a legacy of compassion alongside him.**

"Sometimes on a really hard day, just reflecting back on how there are people all over this globe who are praying, who care, who are involved — it gives you that extra confidence to lean into God and deal with whatever it is that you're having to face."



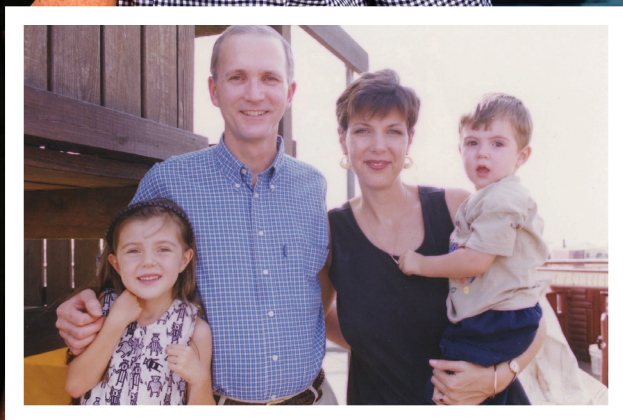
Want to hear more about Dr. Gary and Susan's journey with Mercy Ships — directly from them?

**Watch our exclusive webinar with the Parkers here:
mercyships.org/partnerwebinar**

Creating an impactful legacy isn't easy. It requires daily dedication, steadfast integrity, a heart devoted to serving others — and few reflect those values as clearly as Dr. Gary. His legacy is woven into the thousands of lives he's transformed — patients, crew, and all who have witnessed the impact of a life rooted in compassion and faith.

There's no doubt that his 40-year commitment to Mercy Ships has built a legacy that will never be forgotten.

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Give today.



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