

W A V E S O F M E D C Y

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As a new year begins, we pause to recognize the extraordinary role YOU play in Mercy Ships' mission of hope and healing. You are more than a supporter — **you are the reason lives are transformed.** Because of your generosity, children who once struggled with every step can now run and play. Families who lived with fear and struggle now embrace a future filled with possibility.

Every gift you give, every prayer you lift, and every encouragement you offer empower our volunteers to bring surgical care to those who might never otherwise receive it. While our volunteers are the hands of Mercy Ships — selfless servants who travel the world, leaving behind the familiar to serve patients they may never meet again — you are the heart behind our mission. **It is your faithful support that sustains these acts of service, turning hope into tangible healing.**



bringing *hope*

As we sail into this new year, we look forward to the opportunity for transformation in Sierra Leone, Madagascar, and Ghana. **With your continued support**, we will bring safe, free surgeries, train local healthcare workers, and offer communities a fresh start — a chance for children and adults alike to live fully, freely, and with dignity. Each life restored is a new beginning, made possible by your generosity and belief in a world where hope is never out of reach. **And we could not be more grateful!**

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute."

— Proverbs 31:8



and *healing*

Until Hope Arrives

You may have seen some of the conditions we'll share in the following pages while waiting at the doctor's office. But chances are, you didn't realize it — because the patient received help early.

In many parts of Africa, the kind of medical care we might take for granted simply doesn't exist. Hospitals are often too far away, under-resourced, or too few to meet the overwhelming need. Conditions that could be healed in hours with skilled surgical care become a source of pain, stigma, and lost opportunity. For children like Mohamed, the lack of access to care meant years of limitation.

Mohamed was born with knocked knees, causing struggle with every passing season. Over time, he began to lose not only his mobility but also his chances for an education and the simple joys of childhood. Corrective surgery could have set him on a different path before his first day of school. **Instead, his family carried the burden of waiting, hoping, and praying for a miracle.**

"My mother said, 'One day, God will send people who will come and perform the surgery,'" Mohamed recalled. Behind his hopeful words is a sad reality echoed across countless communities in sub-Saharan Africa. **Without the medical care they need, children are forced to grow up burdened with pain and hidden from others, praying for hope to arrive.**



Burn injuries tell a similar story of unmet need.

In communities where cooking over open flames is the daily norm, an accident can change the trajectory of a child's life in seconds. Musu was 6 years old when she was burned after a pot of hot oil fell on her, leaving her in pain and her mother, Mamie, consumed with fear.

"When I saw my [child's burns], I didn't feel good," Mamie shared. "As a mother, I felt very bad because she was not born this way."

Without access to emergency burn care, Musu's wounds healed in a way that trapped her. **Each movement was a struggle, and the scars told a visible story of loss.**

In the United States, burns are usually treated right away, so while scars can remain, the severe contractures that limit movement are rarely seen. But in places without early care, a child's everyday actions can be restricted for life. Parents may blame themselves, neighbors may whisper, and children are left unable to perform the simplest acts of independence.

For children like Musu, burns become more than a physical hardship; they become an unnecessary prison of shame, stigma, and isolation.



For others, the burden takes the form of benign tumors that grow silently but relentlessly, pressing on both the body and the spirit.

When we see an unusual bump on our body, help can often be a phone call away. But in areas where medical care is scarce, these small growths can form into life-threatening tumors.

At only 17 years old, Arline knows this weight all too well. When a lump first appeared on her neck at age 14, her family sacrificed everything — their land and their livestock — for a surgery that failed.

And in countries where medical options are limited, **an incomplete operation can mean a worse outcome than before.** Instead of healing, the tumor grew back, heavier, more visible, and more devastating.

"I am still young, and I have this condition that makes me uncomfortable," Arline shared. "I want it to be removed. **I am tired of hiding.**"

In places with access to maxillofacial care, the growth on Arline's neck would have been removed long before it reshaped her life. But without specialized surgeons, patients like her are often left to endure ridicule, job loss, or outright rejection from their communities.



"They thought he was cursed. Some people even said, 'If he were my son, I would have killed him or left him behind."

Those words broke Roseline's heart. They weren't just careless remarks; they were a window into how her son was seen by others — **not as a child to be cherished, but as a curse to be feared.** In her community, being different was dangerous, a sentiment many of our patients have experienced.

Instead of compassion, families facing conditions like cleft lip or palate often encounter rejection, blame, and shame. **This treatable condition that affects thousands of babies every year is often misunderstood in these communities, becoming a curse and a stigma.**

What could have been healed through surgery instead becomes a lifetime of barriers. Children with untreated clefts face not only the struggles of the condition, including speaking and eating difficulties, but rejection from the places they call home. Families are shunned, mothers are blamed, and children are labeled as cursed or unwanted.

Yet even in the face of cruelty, hope does not disappear. It lives in the quiet resilience of families who refuse to give up. It rises in whispered prayers, spoken through tears.

"We prayed every day — days and nights so that my son would get surgery," Roseline said.

A prayer for hope, like so many throughout sub-Saharan Africa. **One that you help answer...**





Read Mohamed's full story at:
mercyships.org/mohamed

When Hope Arrives

When a ship full of volunteers arrives in a community in need, hope sails in with it.

For more than 45 years, friends like you have made it possible for Mercy Ships to change lives, one surgery at a time. Because of you, children and adults facing impossible circumstances are able to reclaim their futures.

Every operation on board our hospital ships, the *Global Mercy* and the *Africa Mercy*, restores health, dignity, and the chance to live fully — to speak, to smile, to learn, and to dream. **Families are transformed as parents watch their children thrive, and communities grow stronger as people regain confidence and independence.**

But hope is only fulfilled when we all come together. Your prayers and support meet the hearts of our volunteers, who serve selflessly and bring healing and comfort to patients who trust that hope is stronger than fear. **Together, we create change that lasts long after the ship sails away.**

We could not be more grateful, and neither can our patients...

“The way my child was when we came to the ship is not the way she was when we left... We went there with sickness and returned home with joy!”

— Mamie, Musu’s mother

Read Musu's full story at:
mercyships.org/musu



A woman with short, curly hair is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a light-colored top. In the background, a hospital setting is visible with other people and medical equipment.

"I want to make up for the things I couldn't do before. I don't hide anymore...[I'm] just like everyone else!"

— Arline

A solid blue rectangular banner with white text on it.

Read Arline's full story at:
mercyships.org/arline





“Now that he had the surgery, I'm so happy, so happy! It took my worries away.”

— Roseline, Armane's mother

Read Armane's full story at:
mercyships.org/armane

You are the reason hope arrives.

Give today.

