



***Ignite Volunteerism: Canadian Volunteers Extend Care
Beyond Borders with Mercy Ships Canada***

Vancouver, BC, April 20th 2026 – During **National Volunteer Week 2026**, **Mercy Ships Canada** is proud to shine a light on the Canadians who embody, every single day, the transformative power of volunteerism. Physicians, educators, and individuals from diverse professional backgrounds who have dedicated their time to volunteer over and over again have chosen to place their expertise at the service of the world's most vulnerable populations, aboard the largest civilian hospital ships ever built.

Canadian volunteerism knows no borders, it ignites action far beyond our shores. Experienced professionals from diverse fields have answered the call, stepped aboard, and journeyed toward communities with limited or no access to surgical care. Among them, two remarkable Canadian couples embody this spirit in distinct yet equally powerful ways: a husband-and-wife medical team who have served side by side on multiple voyages, and a couple whose passion continues to spark change through fundraising and advocacy long after their time at sea.

David and Elaine Sigalet

David and Elaine Sigalet of Calgary, Alberta, are a living example of what shared purpose looks like when it becomes a way of life. David, a pediatric surgeon with a distinguished academic and clinical career, and Elaine, a dedicated healthcare professional, have both volunteered with **Mercy Ships**, bringing world-class surgical expertise to patients in West Africa who might otherwise never have access to life-changing care.

For the Sigalets, the decision to volunteer was never just professional, it was personal. Volunteering side by side, they have witnessed firsthand the quiet dignity of patients who travel days on foot for the chance at a surgery that could free them from years of suffering. Their journey with **Mercy Ships** has been one of mutual growth: giving generously of their skills, and returning home forever changed by the gratitude, resilience, and humanity they encountered on board.

In August 2026, they will embark on a journey of service as Chief Medical Officer and Education, Training and Advocacy Director, joining the leadership team to bring Mercy Ships further.

Glenn and Sylvia Wiffin

Glenn and Sylvia represent another vital face of volunteerism: the committed community ambassadors who extend the mission of Mercy Ships long after the voyage ends. Based in Ontario, the Wiffins have channelled their passion into committing to 2 years of volunteering, using their professional and life experience to advance Mercy Ships' mission.

Glenn serves aboard the *Africa Mercy* as Education, Training and Advocacy Director. Experienced in medical mission, he initially was looking to find a place to volunteer where his wife could also be involved as a nonmedical member. Over the past year, he has worked to expand and strengthen the training programs offered on board, coordinating clinical opportunities for medical professionals, surgical residents, and student nurses, and building partnerships with local medical facilities to support skills development and long-term healthcare capacity within host nations. It is the kind of quiet, structural work that rarely makes headlines but leaves a long-lasting impact once the ship leaves the country for its next mission.

Together, Glenn and Sylvia embody something essential about the **Mercy Ships** mission: that world-class surgical care is only possible because of the full ecosystem of people who make the ship run, the leaders building healthcare capacity in country, and the community builders ensuring that everyone on board feels seen, supported, and at home.

These two portraits are only a glimpse of the remarkable energy that Canada contributes to the **Mercy Ships** mission. Surgeons, nurses, engineers, teachers, cooks, logisticians, and advocates. Every year, Canadians from coast to coast embark for weeks or years at a time, bringing with them a distinctive blend of skill, compassion, and solidarity.

During National Volunteer Week, **Mercy Ships Canada** invites every Canadian to reflect on what their expertise could accomplish here at home, or on the other side of the world. Whether you are a healthcare professional, a teacher, a technician, or simply someone moved by the desire to contribute, your skills could make all the difference on board.

Learn more about Mercy Ships Canada's mission [HERE](#)

Support Glenn and Sylvia's journey [HERE](#)

About Mercy Ships

Mercy Ships operates hospital ships that deliver free surgeries and other healthcare services to those with little access to safe medical care. An international faith-based organization, Mercy Ships has focused entirely on partnering with African nations for the past three decades. Working with in-country partners, Mercy Ships also provides training to local healthcare professionals and supports the construction of in-country medical infrastructure to leave a lasting impact. Each year, more than 2,500 volunteer professionals from over 60 countries serve on board the world's two largest non-governmental hospital ships, the Africa Mercy® and the Global Mercy™. Professionals such as surgeons, dentists, nurses, health trainers, cooks, and engineers dedicate their time and skills to accelerate access to safe surgical and anesthetic care. Mercy Ships was founded in 1978 and has offices in 16 countries, as well as an Africa Service Center in Dakar, Senegal. For more information, visit mercyships.org.

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