

WAVES OF MERCY



Choosing hope isn't always easy. In fact, for the people we serve across sub-Saharan Africa, hope is one of the hardest choices they'll ever make.

To persevere through pain, believing that help will one day come. To cling to courage under the crippling weight of shame. To fight for your place in a community where difference equals danger.

When news travels of one of our hospital ships arriving in port, hope grows stronger than ever. **But so does the risk of pursuing it.**

To take the first step out of your village — then the next, and the next, going further than you've ever gone before. To ignore the warnings of those who say you'll never return. To climb up the gangway of an enormous ship and entrust your life, or your child's life, to people you've never met.



bringing *hope*

Hope is never passive. It's an active commitment, daring to believe in a better future even when you can't yet see it. **And it's the same commitment you make through your inspiring support of this mission.**

Your compassion meets our patients' determination, transforming their resilience into relief through free, life-changing surgery. Because of you, the hope our patients carry doesn't stay on our ship; it travels home with them, creating a ripple effect that touches their families and entire communities.

Hope and healing is a mission we can only accomplish together. **Thank you for standing with our patients, transforming hope into reality for those brave enough to believe in it.**

"Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord." — Psalm 31:24



and *healing*



Carrying Hope Through Fear

Alfredo | Madagascar

Even before her son was born, it was clear that Doxie would do anything for her child.

From navigating long journeys from her rural village for prenatal checkups to moving to the city as her due date approached, Doxie was determined to give her baby the best care possible.

Little Alfredo entered the world two months earlier than expected. **But his early arrival was only the beginning of the challenges ahead.** Alfredo had also been born with a cleft lip and palate; a condition no one in their family had ever seen before.

The moment Doxie saw her son's face, joy and fear collided.

"I said to the Lord, 'What should I do for this baby, since you have given him to me?'" she recalled. "I was so afraid because I wasn't able to breastfeed him."

In Malagasy tradition, new mothers are expected to remain in bed for weeks after giving birth. But worried for her son's health, Doxie felt she had no time to lose.

"I was determined that day. I needed help for my baby."

Despite her exhaustion and physical weakness, she wrapped her child in a blanket and carried him to a Mercy Ships screening center at a local hospital. But at only a few days old, Alfredo was too young for surgery and needed time to grow

He weighed just 5 pounds, 11 ounces at 6 months old...

— Victoria Pannill,
Volunteer Nurse

stronger first. Doxie was given an appointment for a later date, along with the best support possible while she waited.

No one could have predicted the extent of the challenges Alfredo would face in the

months ahead. His health continued to decline, and Doxie's family believed there was nothing more to be done. **But this brave young mother refused to give up.**

Drawing strength from her faith, Doxie brought Alfredo directly to the *Africa Mercy*. She didn't know who to speak to or what would happen. She only knew she had to try.

When our volunteers caught sight of the little boy, **they knew he needed help immediately.**

"He was severely malnourished," remembered Victoria Pannill, a volunteer nurse from the United States. "He weighed just 5 pounds, 11 ounces at 6 months old. He should have weighed close to that when he was born."

Through our Infant Feeding Program, Alfredo began his journey toward becoming strong enough for surgery. Our volunteers carefully fed him tiny amounts of formula every hour so he could gain weight at a safe rate.



12 mois

And though Alfredo's body was weak, it quickly became clear his spirit took after his mother's.

"When I heard him cry, I knew this boy was a little fighter," shared Cobie Waasdorp, another volunteer nurse who cared for Alfredo. "That cry told me he was going to make it."

Day by day, he began to improve; small changes that felt enormous to his mother. Feed by feed, hour by hour, Doxie proudly watched her son grow stronger.

"I couldn't hold back my tears of joy," she said, **"because I didn't expect that my child could be healed."**

Alfredo's resilience shone in the months that followed. His transformation brought joy and relief to everyone around him, including nurse Cobie, who smiled as she described him.

"Chubby cheeks. Smiling. A little fat baby, how a baby is supposed to be."

It was a special day when Alfredo finally reached a safe weight for surgery. And after four hours in the operating room, his cleft lip was successfully repaired.

For Doxie, the surgery meant more than physical healing; it was proof that hope is stronger than fear. "God really didn't abandon us," she said. "Even when I felt discouraged, He was always there to comfort us."

Today, Doxie looks toward the future with simple but powerful dreams for her son. "My wish for him is that he will grow up like every other kid and have a better future."

A mother's strength. A child's courage. A volunteer's compassion. A supporter's generosity. Each alone is powerful. **But together, they become something greater — lives transformed forever.**





Braving it All for a New Life

Theogette | Madagascar

How long would you wait for help to arrive? How far would you travel for a chance at healing?

For 40-year-old Theogette from Madagascar, the answer was simple: **she would brave it all for the hope of a new life.**

The first three decades of Theogette's life were simple and fulfilling. She found purpose working in the rice fields and enjoyed caring for her family. But everything changed when she began to suffer from a painful toothache.

A local dentist removed the tooth. In its place, however, a small bump appeared, which began to swell relentlessly.

Before long, the bump had developed into a large tumor. **And as the growth along her jawline spread, so did the whispers in her village.** "People said I was sick and contagious," Theogette recalled. "They influenced my husband, and he left me."

Despite her suffering, **there was only one thing on Theogette's mind — her three children.** Determined to give them the best life she could, she silently carried the weight of both parent and provider.

"I have to go to the farm to be able to feed my kids, although the swelling hurts when I work for too long."

For ten long years, Theogette persevered through pain, isolation, and stigma. **Then one day, hope sparked in an unexpected way.** Her nephew, a medical student, heard about Mercy Ships through his university and called to share the news.

After a decade of struggle, hope stirred in Theogette's heart; at last, this could be her chance at healing. **But pursuing that chance would require courage — and an intense three-day journey to reach our ship.**

Leaving fear behind, Theogette traveled one day by canoe and two more by ferry. Finally, she reached a Mercy Ships vehicle that brought her to the *Africa Mercy*.

On the day of her operation, Theogette smiled and gave a confident thumbs-up, exclaiming, "Faly!" — the Malagasy word for "happy." **Even through a difficult recovery, and even while missing her children, her courage never wavered.**

After a few weeks, Theogette was fully healed and ready to step into her new life.

Hope had carried her through the long journey to our ship. Now, the excitement of seeing her family again and sharing her transformation carried her home: **"When I get back home, my children will be happy!"**

For so many like Theogette, healing doesn't simply happen. It takes hope to believe in it, courage to seek it, and strength to endure the journey.

And it takes generous hearts like yours to meet them with the life-changing care and compassion they need. Thank you for bringing healing to life!

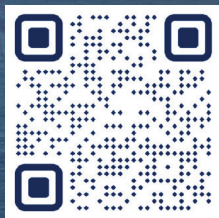


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presents



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