



## KRB Update #2197 – Community/Benin

Keith R. Brinkman

10 May 2014

Greetings from the Republic of Congo on the *Africa Mercy*.

Community: I love being a part of the Mercy Ships community on the ships and previously on land and for the last seven years the community of the m/v *Africa Mercy*. We are a community of faith as together we serve the forgotten poor with the love of Christ and acts of service as part of following the 2,000-year-old model of Jesus. We represent a diverse range of Christian traditions and denominations. The crew come from up to 40 different nations around the world. During a typical field service, we will have over 1,000 crew come through the ship. We agree to live and model our core values of loving God, loving and serving others, being people of integrity and excellence in all we say and do.

The ship serves many purposes, for many of the long term crew it serves as our home; my cabin #4236 on deck 4 port side is my home. I am thankful that after many years of service and my position, I have a single cabin to call home. In addition to being home, the ship is where we work, serve, eat, play, gather together with friends and also to host guests including heads of state, and where we come together for worship and prayer. All of this is within a length of 500 feet (152 meters) by 77.7 feet (23.7 meters) wide on 8 decks – just think about that. The population on board may reach up to 350 adults and 50 children + around 200 local workers/day crew coming in and out daily + over 100 patients and caregivers in the hospital on deck 3. Living and serving in close community and working cross-culturally brings great joys and fulfillment, as well as frustrations and disappointments. We use our experiences in community life to grow in character and love.



Crew Photo from August 2013

Next Field Service: An announcement from Mercy Ships leadership: “*The Mercy Ships International Management Team (IMT) has closely followed the Ebola outbreak in Guinea and Liberia since it came to light in March. The IMT has consulted with a broad range of outside experts and internal stakeholders. While the international response to the outbreak has been strong and decisive, and we believe it will be effectively extinguished in due course, the uncertainty it poses at this time compromises our ability to plan and execute the anticipated Guinea field service. Our operational*

*requirements to function include supply and personnel logistics that do not give us the ability to further wait on prospective outcomes of the Ebola situation over the coming weeks and months. As such, we have chosen to postpone going to Guinea and will instead return to Cotonou, Benin, where the Africa Mercy last served in 2009.*” My heart and prayers are with the people of Guinea during this difficult time. I was in Benin in 2009 and have many good memories and look forward to an amazing field service with them starting in August.

**Please pray** \* All final patients are able to go home and that we would finish strong here in the Republic of Congo \* People of Guinea \* People of Benin and our Advance Team already in country

Serving Together,

**Keith**

Email: [keith.brinkman@yahoo.com](mailto:keith.brinkman@yahoo.com)  
[www.KeithBrinkman.com](http://www.KeithBrinkman.com)

