



KRB Update #2204 – Mercy Ministries

Keith R. Brinkman with Mercy Ships

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Salama from Madagascar

I have had a good week and wish to share a bit about it with you all. I was able to go to two of our Mercy Ministries sites for a visit. As part of the advance work, I worked on finding potential mercy ministries partners since I first came to Madagascar back in September. It is great to see the various partnerships that have been formed and the opportunities for the crew – both long term and short term – to come alongside existing organizations here in Toamasina. Mercy Ministries is an area that I have the privilege to oversee; though I have a coordinator who ensure everything happens at all our sites with our partners and crew. Our program and activities at each site varies greatly, though our highest goal is to demonstrate God's love.



This week on Wednesday, I joined with a large group from the ship to go to the Semato Deaf School here in Toamasina. When we arrived, we went around and greeted each child and the staff. They are quick to start signing their name. So I gave my name as the letter 'K'. Some of you may know that I learned a small amount of American Sign Language while at Bible College as I had a deaf friend and often sat with him for our times of praise and worship. Though here, they use their own Malagasy Sign Language and the signs I saw are not the same. Though, it was not long before some of the boys were teaching me signs, including greetings, etc. In the photo, Mario is teaching me 'Good Day/Bon Jour/Salama' – right hand salute down to a fist with the thumb way up. One of their teachers, Daniel, who is

hearing, taught me the sign for 'like' and 'love' <two hands together horizontally over the upper left chest> and how the difference is just the expression on the face – it was a lot of fun and full of life. We had a larger than normal group this day as our eye team joined and did brief eye examinations of the students and staff and provided UV blocking sunglasses to all.

Ray de Soleil (Rays of Sun *in English*) is a day care center for handicap children. There are normally up to 12 children attending, but on Thursday only four children were present. I immediately was taken in my Sigobidy, a small five year old with cerebral palsy. You see him in the photo in the car seat next to me. He often would give you the biggest smile with his whole face and mouth wide open as we played with bubbles and balloons. Our day crew, Marina, brought her guitar and played some hymns that we sang softly in English and the staff sang in Malagasy – such a peaceful time. I felt such delight every time he would stretch his body and smile big.



Some of our other Mercy Ministries Sites: Children's Home, Prison (Men, Women and Juveniles), Jesus Film, Maison de Traite (Senior Center), White Orchard Mental Handicap School, Pediatric Ward at Hôpital Be and visits to our own HOPE Center.

This week we have also had our Leadership Course for Community Leaders taking place. This four day course is in partnership with Samaritan's Strategy and Chris Ampadu. The purpose of this training is for local government, community and church leaders to gain an awareness of a biblical worldview and practice a whole-person, incarnational leadership that provides tangible demonstrations of Christ's love to a broken people. I visited on the last day during which our agriculture facilitators spoke to the group and took questions and answers.

Please pray for all the adults and children we are building relationships with through Mercy Ministries and the community leaders who just finished this course.

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