



KRB Update #2212 – My Patients

Keith R. Brinkman with Mercy Ships

12 February 2016

Passing a balloon like it was a soccer/football from patient to patient using head, hands and feet while in their hospital beds on bed rest – rolling a ball in the hallway with a small boy with his arm at a 90 degree angle set for healing following burn scar contracture release surgery due to horrible burns – short petite Malagasy women as small as my niece shuffling along the hallway singing praises to God softly as they await their healing and discharge after obstetric fistula surgery and are no longer wet. This is a taste of life in our hospital where I live and serve. My commute from my 13' x 8' (4 x 2.4 meters) cabin to my office involves walking down one set of stairs and then through the halls of our hospital and takes a total sum of 90 seconds. That time is if I don't stop to greet the patients from one of the five hospital wards if they are walking, singing, playing with balloons, or on ride-on-toys in the hallway.

Weekly when calling my Mom, I will ask if she would like to hear a patient story. I wish to share a few with you:

Mosolo – 10 years old and from a remote village – came to the screening and accepted for surgery for extreme bowed legs (genu varus) – Dr. Frank and team performed the surgery in November and he was in casts for both legs till early February, now they are removed and he has intensive physical therapy – amazing kid. When I would visit him at the HOPE Center – we walked all around and for one set of stairs, he grabs my hand, his hand on the edge and would swing both legs out and go down two or even three steps at a time (see photo). He will be discharged soon to start the journey home with his healing and hope restored having been loved and cared for, knowing more of the



Father's love for him.



Berthelin – 16 years old from a coastal village north of Toamasina – two days sail in a small boat (he said he slept with lifejacket on). His before photos of his feet are too horrific to post – but that is not who he is. He is an artist and an eager-to-learn young man. He drew a picture for me – I proudly put on my small refrigerator in my cabin and like any artist, I had him sign his name. His smile lights up Ward A. He was come twice to Mercy Ships for his surgeries, which included the amputation of his right foot. He just had 'bed rest' restrictions lifted and he is so 'faly faly' (happy in Malagasy). I will have more time with him as we are not sure when he will be finally discharged.

Sitraka – I first met this 13 year old at HOPE Center as he became friends with Mosolo. He was born with cleft lip, one of the most common birth defect in the world. In the US or Europe, surgery would be scheduled and performed as an infant. In Madagascar, this care is not as accessible. Sitraka has lived all these years with this – regrettably he has not attended school. Though, he does worship at his local church and wow can he sing praises to God. Thankfully, he received his surgery on Tuesday this week and it took a couple days for him to feel better – to look in the mirror and feel his upper lip healed. Currently, he is at the HOPE Center for a few more days and then he and his cousin can return home restored.



Hope is powerful and I am in awe of how the Lord brings hope back into the lives of our patients and in further awe that He has allowed me to a small part of their stories over these many years. *"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm, and secure."* Hebrews 6:19

Prayer Points: *our patients full recovery *those patients still coming as the hospital is open till late May *our patients who have returned home healed *those we were not able to provide surgery for *my own nephew Jeremy, 16 years old, who is fighting cancer back in Indiana

