



KRB Update #2215 – Fathers as Caregivers

Keith R. Brinkman with Mercy Ships

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After great comments on last month’s update on mothers who have come with their children to the *Africa Mercy* for hope and healing, this month I will focus on fathers. Today is Father’s Day in the US and in South Africa where we are presently. Any patient coming to receive surgery who is under 18 years old is required to have a caregiver. The caregiver may be a mother, **father**, uncle, aunt, grandparent, older sibling. This month, I wish to share about Frederic & Clementine, a father whose daughter received healing on board in Madagascar.



Clementine’s family lived a very simple life farming beans, rice and peanuts. Born with a bilateral cleft lip and palate – two splits from her upper lip to her nose and a hole in the roof of her mouth – Clementine found eating and speaking very difficult. Local doctors explained to her father, Frederic, that the only thing that could fix Clementine’s lip and palate was a very costly surgery in a hospital far from their village. Such a surgery was far beyond the family’s reach financially. “As her father, I’m sad I can’t protect her (from the teasing),” shared Frederic. “We couldn’t do anything. We live so far away!” After learning of Mercy Ships and within two weeks after her arrival,

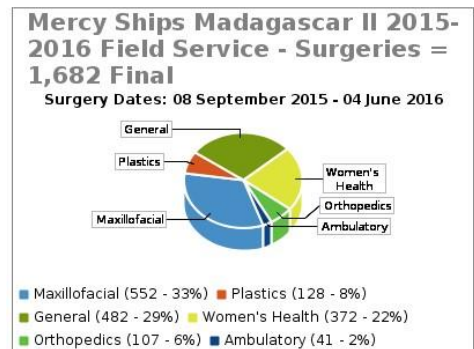
Clementine was onboard the hospital ship to have her free surgery. Afterward, Clementine began working with a speech therapist to learn how to use her newly constructed palate. Years of speaking with a hole in the roof of her mouth made it a challenge to use her new palate, but Clementine worked as hard at her therapy as she did in her studies and achieved great results. Slowly she learned that all the sounds that were difficult for her to make prior to surgery were a lot easier to make now that her palate was closed. Finally, the day came for Clementine and Frederic to return home. They stopped at the market, and Clementine browsed through the display of earrings. The choices seemed endless. She finally settled on a dangling silver pair with pink stones. As she put them up to her earlobes, she beamed up at her father. Frederic’s heart melted as he realized that just six weeks ago, his daughter had a very different appearance. He returned her smile and said, “Every time you see these earrings, you’ll remember our journey and adventure.” As they departed from the market with Clementine’s new earrings, Clementine hugged her father tightly. His courage and sacrifice in bringing her to the ship had made her new life possible. She would never forget this daddy-daughter adventure, the adventure that changed her life.



If you would like to read the full story on Clementine – A Daddy-Daughter Adventure, it is available on my web site in ‘KRB Archives’.

For our second field service in Madagascar, we provided 1,682 life-changing surgeries to 1,451 unique patients of which 36% were children 14 years and younger & 51% female 49% male. Over 11,000 adults, teens and children received dental care. 1,451 healthcare professionals attended courses hosted by Mercy Ships in Toamasina, the capital and all the regional hospitals around the country. 29 finished the Nutritional Agriculture course and are now back with their organizations to train hundreds of others over the upcoming years. Hundreds decided to follow Jesus after viewing the Jesus Film and thousands received prayer. Our reporting and statistics is one area I am responsible for on board the *Africa Mercy* and I work hard for integrity and excellence.

Together, we bring hope and healing to the forgotten poor as we follow the example of Jesus.



Prayer Points: Time in shipyard for required repairs/inspections in Durban, KZN, South Africa / Our preparations for the upcoming field service in Benin in less than two months.

Dedicated to my Dad – I love you.

Serving Together, **Keith** Email: keith.brinkman@yahoo.com [kreb@keithbrinkman.com](mailto:krb@keithbrinkman.com) www.KeithBrinkman.com