



KRB Update #2223 – Start of New Field Service

Keith R. Brinkman with Mercy Ships 30 September 2017

What it is like when we start a new field service in a new country? Well, our Advance Team would have been in the country four to five months before the arrival of the ship. I serve as their liaison on board and have been on previous advance teams. Whatever is possible for them to accomplish before our arrival is done, so that we can have a good start.

* Orientation and Training for over 270 day crew (local workers) who serve in almost every department on board – they are from the local community and we provide them with a stipend and meal.

* Welcoming of hundreds of new crew volunteers – we usually average about 100 people arriving and departing every month – our community is in a constant state of change. Currently, we have 417 persons including our children from 35 nations.

* Learning how to drive in a new country – who has the right a way in a roundabout – how do you get to the airport, HOPE Center, Eye Clinic, Dental Clinic, Team House, even the market and for the large port of Douala how do you even get to the north and south gates

* Our hospital is secured during shipyard and sailing and so the hospital team work on setting it all back up – but the greatest moment is when the patients come and as I walk between my cabin in the back (aft) part of the ship to the front (bow) where my office is to see the children in the hallways and the women doing their daily walks – life has returned to our hospital – a place we pray that will be an opportunity of hope and healing. See photo → Cecilia who had surgery to repair her leg – she is here with her daddy.

* Arrival Ceremony and Partners Reception help to connect our partners with our teams on board. Plus many other activities to make all this possible.



For me more specifically, I have a three page Checklist for Arrival at a New Field Service including the following:

* Reporting – Statistical Reports – format, language and how often, for Mercy Ships and for the Government and Partners

* Reporting to the Government, who are our main host, in Cameroon they have requested weekly and monthly narrative reports – 3 to 4 pages in French and English

* Maintain our Field Service Overview sharing about each project we have planned from surgical, non-surgical and all the medical capacity building courses and mentoring and infrastructure.

* Programs Opportunity Sign Up – with all the opportunities the long term and short term crew can sign up and join + similar one for Local Churches, Ward Service and HOPE Center Service on Sundays

* Set up spreadsheets and then monthly compiling, tracking and analyzing our expenses by project against our budgets

* Update our process and facilitate for donations of items to local partners

* Create our Communications Map with the Government and Partners

* Make plans and orchestrate the Programs Reporting Times on Fridays.

* Working with our Mercy Ministries Coordinator for our new partners which often include children's homes/orphanages, schools for the disabled, prison and sharing the Jesus Film with local churches. See Photo with Junior who is at the children's home which includes those who are disabled where I spent my birthday this year→



Prayer Requests:

1. Pray for the hearts & spirits of our patients and partners to be touched in greater measure by the hope and love of Jesus.
2. Additional women with obstetric fistula who we can provide free surgeries for them for a restoration of healing and hope.
3. Additional ophthalmic patients who have severe vision loss in both eyes, so that sight can be restored.
4. Safety and security – if you watch international or African news you will see that there are protests and unrest in this country but not in our region– our Captain and Security team take the safety of our people very seriously and restrictions are put in place for that.

Serving Together, **Keith**

Email: keith.brinkman@yahoo.com [kreb@keithbrinkman.com](mailto:krb@keithbrinkman.com) www.KeithBrinkman.com