

FIRST ANNUAL MERCY MONDAY IN MAY OFF TO A GREAT START!

Monday, May 9 marked the first annual Mercy Monday in May. Coinciding with Mother's Day, National Volunteers Week from May 9 - 15 and International Nurses Day on Thursday May 14, Mercy Monday is a campaign designed to raise money for Mercy Ships by participants hosting a Mercy Meal - morning teas, lunches and dinners. The following are just a few stories from the generous participants who took part in this year's Mercy Monday trial.



Amy Wilson

Held a morning tea, selling cupcakes and brownies at her workplace

The morning tea went really well. I made some cupcakes and brownies and sold them throughout the day for a couple of dollars. We only have a small mental health centre but staff were really impressed about what Mercy Ships

did. Most did not know what it was. It was a great way to be show people the great work that Mercy Ships is doing.

Pat Wagner & Necia Bennett

Held a morning tea with their friends

A Mercy Monday morning tea was organised in Caloundra by Pat Wagner and Necia Bennett. Both invited a number of their friends, and 35 men and women accepted the invitation to come for morning tea. The event took place in the garage of the Wagner home because the rain was continuing to fall, as it has in Queensland for months.



Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!

Visit facebook.com/mercyshipsaustralia and twitter.com/mercyshipsau

Mercy Ships Australia
24 Bulcock St. Caloundra QLD 4551
PO Box 1080 Caloundra QLD 4551

Phone: 07 5437 2992
Fax: 07 5437 2488

website: www.mercyships.org.au
e-mail: msaust@mercyships.org.au
Australian Charity Number: 097037922

John Wagner, a member of the Mercy Ships Australia board, talked briefly about the work of Mercy Ships volunteers and showed some pictures. A 'buy and sell' trading table had also been promoted and sales were good. Those who came gave generously, and many took home a money box and literature. A number indicated they would plan their own Mercy Meal in the future.

Matthew & Amanda Hansen

Held a dinner for their friends and colleagues

Matthew and Amanda Hansen hosted their Mercy Meal at Macauleys Restaurant in Coffs Harbour. The three course menu which Macauleys produced for the Mercy Meal satisfied all appetites with mouth-watering food, fresh local produce and delicious desserts. The response to invitations, sent out through the local hospital and GP network, was excellent. Matt and Amanda were delighted when over 60 guests attended including local doctors, nurses, staff from the Rural UNSW Campus and local business representatives. The restaurant was fully booked on the night and the evening raised \$1,955.



A big "thank you" to those who participated in this initial trial.

To register your interest in participating in Mercy Monday in May in 2012, email: amanda.hansen@mercyships.org



MORE THAN PHYSICAL HEALING



The enclosed story of Bambay is testimony to the national healing taking place in the recovering war-torn nation of Sierra Leone. It is a remarkable story of a 15-year-old boy whose hands were chopped off by a rebel soldier for allegedly voting in presidential elections. It tells of his courageous decision to forgive the rebel even though he had the opportunity to avenge the mutilation he had suffered. Despite his hardship, Bambay is determined to be self-sufficient when it would be so easy for him to resort to begging. Instead, he is participating in the Mercy Ships "Food for Life" training program designed to teach organic farming principles to budding farmers.

Mercy Ships is proud to walk beside and assist young men like Bambay as the nation of Sierra Leone rebuilds after their ten-year civil war.

Cupcakes and Brownies anyone?
This past month, Mercy Ships Australia conducted a trial campaign



called "Mercy Monday in May". The day is designed to raise money for Mercy Ships through hosting a Mercy Meal - morning teas, lunches and dinners. Those involved in the trial used their creativity, like the accompanying picture, to promote the Mercy Ships cause to family and friends. "It was a fun way to promote Mercy Ships", said Amy Wilson. We plan to take the campaign national next year and welcome as many of our supporters as possible to become engaged in the program. Read more about Mercy Monday in May on the back page.

Double the Value of your Gift
As the Africa Mercy continues to provide the medical needs of the poor of Sierra Leone, we have been challenged by a generous donor to match his grant of \$65,000. He will match dollar for dollar up

to \$65,000 before the end of June. Already, our medical volunteers on the Africa Mercy have performed more than 11,000 procedures restoring health and vitality to thousands of patients. This matching grant will enable thousands more to receive the care they so desperately need.

Your gift today - DOUBLED by the grant - will enable us to serve the poorest of the poor who come to us... so every dollar you give will be matched and bring a double blessing. \$10 will become \$20; \$20 will become \$40.

May God bless you as we work together to save even more lives.

Gary Regazzoli
Chief Executive Officer
Mercy Ships Australia

PS: See above for an incredible offer to double the value of your gift PPS: By sending in your gift before June 30, you can claim your gift against your tax bill



GIVING HOPE AND QUALITY OF LIFE TO THE WORLD'S FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

Yes, I would like to give a life-changing donation to Mercy Ships

Enclosed is my donation (Cheque, Money Order, Credit Card) of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$200 \$ _____

I would like a Mercy Ships representative to come and give a presentation to our club, group, church, school

Please send me information on how to leave a gift to Mercy Ships in my Will

Please remove my name from your mailing list

Thank you for changing lives with Mercy Ships

Please return to: **Mercy Ships Australia** PO Box 1080 Caloundra QLD 4551
Phone: 07 5437 2992 Fax: 07 5437 2488 Email: msaust@mercyships.org.au

CREDIT / DEBIT CARD GIVING

Credit Card Number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Name on Card:

Expiry Date:/..... Signature:.....

Please credit donation to:

General Fund - For those who do not need a tax receipt

Relief Fund - For those who may need a tax receipt

(Donations over \$2.00 to Relief Fund are Tax Deductable)

I would like to make this my regular donation

Monthly Payment Yes

Australian Charity Number: 097037922



GIVING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO PEOPLE BORN INTO POVERTY WITH LITTLE OR NO HOPE OF RECEIVING THE CARE REQUIRED TO LEAD NORMAL HEALTHY LIVES

BINTA'S CURSE IS LIFTED



Binta's sister, Marie waits at Binta's bedside as she recovers from orthopaedic surgery onboard the Africa Mercy

She took her daughter to a Mercy Ships medical screening at a hospital in Kabala. Binta was delighted when she was accepted for surgery. She and her sister, Marie, traveled to the *Africa Mercy*, and Binta received a free surgery to correct her legs.

Even though Binta's legs are still in casts, they are beautifully straight. When Binta goes home, she hopes to continue school and spend more time with her friends. She simply says, "When I go [home], I will be happy."

Binta's surgery has changed her life forever. Thanks to the doctors onboard the *Africa Mercy* she has a bright, happy, future ahead of her – a wonderful reason to smile!



Binta takes a photo of her straightened legs

Ten-year-old Binta lays in her hospital bed onboard the *Africa Mercy* clicking her fingers and smiling at everyone around her. Her cheerful attitude and smiling face cause all of the patients around her to laugh.

Binta was born with bowed legs, a problem easily correctable if proper medical care can be received, but in Sierra Leone proper medical care is hard or even impossible to find. Binta's friends and neighbors laughed at her and mocked her because of her strange legs. When this happened, Binta would walk away to be by herself. In West Africa, bowed legs are usually seen as a curse instead of a medical condition. This made her family very sad. "I was not feeling fine," said Binta's older sister Marie.

One day Binta's mother heard a radio announcement about a hospital ship that might be able to help Binta.

SAYING "NO" TO LIFE AS A BEGGAR

Bambay is an extraordinary person, whose life's goal is 'not to be a beggar'.

This reflects the reality of life in Sierra Leone after the nation's brutally violent ten-year civil war. The conflict devastated the people and left the country in shambles and poverty.

During the war, Bambay, his mother, and two younger siblings fled from their village and hid in the bush for a month. When they ran out of food, Bambay went back to his village to find something, anything, they could eat. He planned to return to his family that day, but it was late. So, he accepted an invitation to stay until the next morning. It was a disastrous decision.

During the night, the village was attacked by rebel soldiers. "You voted for this president," they shouted. Bambay tried to explain that he was only 15 and couldn't vote for anyone. But they wouldn't listen. They chopped off both his hands and left him for dead, along with other villagers who had been mutilated.

Later that day, he was found by a roving seller of goods and taken to a nun at a nearby church. She took him to a hospital and then nursed him back to health. While Bambay was in her care, she asked him what he'd do if he ever found the man who cut off his hands. "I would kill him," said Bambay.

The nun began to plant the seeds of forgiveness into Bambay's thinking. She told him how important it was for his future to relinquish the hate and anger that fueled his unforgiveness. She also did what she could to prepare the young man for life on his own. She arranged surgery that would split the hacked ends of both hands, allowing him to grasp things.

One day Bambay was out with his friends when he saw 'Sewer Poison', the nickname given to the man who had cut off his hands. He went after him and caught him, but couldn't bring himself to kill the man. The seeds of forgiveness had been well-planted. His friends offered to kill the man for him, but Bambay wouldn't allow it. The man pleaded for his life, and Bambay forgave him.

That forgiveness enabled Bambay to move on with his own life. He eventually met and married Mary, and today they have a seven-month-old baby daughter, Ann.



Bambay eats lunch with other members of the Food for Life program. Bambay has learnt to hold things despite his disability.

Today, Bambay is a trainee in the Food for Life Program that was started by Mercy Ships and Bethesda, another non-governmental organisation. The goal of the program is to train people in organic farming methods and in leadership principles. These trainees will, in turn, teach others in their communities. It has the potential of providing food for the people, and improving the financial position of those involved.

Bambay is, indeed, a remarkable man who is achieving much, much more than his goal to 'not to be a beggar'.



Bambay holds his daughter

With your donation and support we can secure the future work of Mercy Ships

Send your gift today!

- \$25 can support a patient for one day onboard the *Africa Mercy*.
- \$50 can provide dental repair for one person.
- \$125 can correct a cleft lip.
- \$400 can cover a Life-Changing Surgery for one desperate person.

mercEnews

Would you like to receive our e-newsletter, *mercEnews*? To sign up for the monthly update, please fill in your email address and mail this section back to us.

Email Address: (Your name and address are on the reverse side of this section)

Donate online at www.mercyships.org.au