

07/09/2026 Tema, Ghana

Hello!

What to say, or rather, where to start?!

In a community like ours, we work, we learn, we play, we pray, we eat, we do sports... alongside other volunteers. And on board a ship, not only do we come together for all these reasons, but we are also vulnerable to outbreaks. Right now, the flu is affecting several of us. As a result, hygiene rules have been strengthened, and masks are mandatory! It's not easy, but the people affected aren't strangers: it's all of us, the very ones who keep the hospital running and the operations going—the exact reason why we are here. If surgeries have to be canceled, patients lose all hope for treatment! The very people we are here for. Suddenly, hygiene rules become much less abstract and far less anonymous.



In a community, there is so much to do far beyond work, from cleaning to entertainment, including for others. Laura is starting to get involved in different areas to help out: going to look after the child-patients in the hospital (games, schooling), and helping out at the café, which allows her to expand her network and speak more and more. English of course! (Even though there is currently a significant number of French speakers on board.) She has also already picked up her camera for the first time for a series of portraits and a group photo, and she is in touch with the communications manager on board...



Noâm, our eldest, is seriously thinking about joining a local football club with a friend from the USA. Unsurprisingly, Lyas has already made some good friends on board. Mahé is finding it a bit harder to make close friends (there are barely any boys his age). The rules on board also give him less freedom of movement than his brothers, so we are trying to figure out how to best support him, both literally and figuratively, so that he can also feel at ease on board. Still, there are a few spots he has already made his own, including the 'internet café' and multiplayer Minecraft! As for Nayah-Lou, she seems like a fish in water! When she plays by herself, she blurts out phrases in English like, 'Ohhh I have to go!' in a rush, leaving her dolls behind to go take care of her unicorn. She never ceases to amaze us...



Photos



Home



As for school, starting out at open sea, things kicked off well. The kids seem to be finding their feet, but graded tests are slowly beginning, and we wonder what the first results will be. When it comes to homework, our children certainly don't seem to spend much more time on it (maybe even less?!) than the other... English-speaking kids! All I can say is: to be continued!

Administratively speaking, 'opening' a hospital in a country within a few weeks (despite years of prior preparation and discussions) is no easy task! We are now an accredited hospital in Ghana, and most of our volunteers have been recognized by the Ghanaian health authorities. This is quite an achievement, because when a country starts putting regulations in place (which is an excellent thing), it isn't necessarily prepared for a floating hospital to arrive with 200 healthcare professionals from diverse and varied health systems, with a multitude of different training paths, degrees, and equivalencies!

For instance, in some of our European countries, scrub techs and circulating staff haven't all gone through a full "nursing" degree. How do you get them recognized in a country where this position is supposed to be filled by qualified nurses?! A developing country sets up rules... and even if we are here for a noble cause, we cannot just ask for exceptions—that would be counterproductive!



In short, things are on the right track, and tomorrow we should be operating on our first patients—children with severely deformed legs! Transformed lives, and finally something concrete for us! Philippe received his license to practice... but he won't be able to join in, as he is currently in isolation due to the flu!

In organizations like these, there are always steps forward and hurdles. Successes and disappointments. The essential thing is to know where we are going, why we are here, and to keep our eyes focused on what matters most. There are so many things beyond our control—Mercy Ships would never have come this far without remaining deeply attached to its mission: following the 2,000-year-old model of Jesus to bring hope and healing to the world's most vulnerable people.

Challenges :

- To manage school assessments
- To establish a healthy routine

Ideally, we are also looking:

- to strengthen our financial support circle...

LAURA Noam NAYAH-LOU
Philippe Lyas MAHE

More photos on our gallery (QR code on the bottom left) and more info on our website!



Photos



Home