HOSPITAL SHIP APPEALS FOR VOLUNTEER NURSES

Mercy Ships, the international charity that runs the world’s largest charity hospital, is appealing for a range of nurses to volunteer in Guinea, West Africa over the next 10 months.

Staffed by more than 400 volunteers at any one time, the Africa Mercy has the capacity to treat up to 6,000 patients every year and the ship urgently needs nurses to commit to volunteering during its outreach in Guinea which starts at the end of this month.

The ship requires nurses with specialities in Adult or Pediatric Medical-Surgical Staff and ICU or PICU and nurses can volunteer from as little as two weeks at a time.

Nurses from all over the UK have volunteered with Mercy Ships over the last 30 years as part of an international crew dedicated to providing hope and healing to the poorest of the poor in Africa.

Judy Polkinhorn, Executive Director of Mercy Ships UK, said, “Around 750 nurses from around the world volunteer on the ship each year and they are at the heart of our work. They provide kind, loving care to all our patients, many of whom have never seen a doctor or been inside a hospital before they come to Mercy Ships.

“We urgently need registered nurses to commit to volunteering on the ship during our outreach over the next 10 months in order that we can provide the level of medical care we planned to the people of Guinea.

“We need adult ICU nurses from this November and adult and paediatric ward nurses from January 2013.
“The Africa Mercy is an acute surgical environment, caring for many patients that have lived a lifetime with their condition and our volunteer nurses play a vital role in their recovery and care.”

One British nurse who has volunteered twice on the Africa Mercy is Lorraine Montgomery, an ophthalmic nurse who works at Milton Keynes NHS Foundation Trust.

Lorraine said: “I love being a nurse and my experiences on the Africa Mercy have enriched my professional and personal life more than I ever expected.

“The nurses on the ship come together from all over the world for one reason - to bring hope and healing to those less fortunate than themselves.

“I volunteer because I want to use my skills to help those less fortunate in the world. Mercy Ships provides excellent medical care to those where this kind of help is either unaffordable or, more commonly, where this specialised care is not available in the country where they live. It really is an inspirational charity and a humbling experience volunteering for them.”

Further information for nurses interested in volunteering with Mercy Ships can be found at http://www.mercyships.org.uk/nurses-we-need-you or by calling Mercy Ships UK on 01438 727800.

Founded in 1978, Mercy Ships has worked in more than 70 countries providing services valued at more than £630million, helping in excess of two million people.

Each year Mercy Ships has more than 1,200 volunteers from over 40 nations. Professionals including surgeons, dentists, nurses, health care trainers, teachers, cooks, seamen, engineers, and agriculturalists donate their time and skills to the effort.

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For further information, please contact Lois Boyle or Laura Maddison at Media House on 0141 220 6040 or lois@mediahouse.co.uk / laura@mediahouse.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

1. Photograph attached: Some Mercy Ships volunteer nurses

2. Mercy Ships is a global charity providing developing countries with free medical and surgical services. It also helps local communities develop sustainable water, sanitation and education programmes.

The Africa Mercy was converted from a Danish rail ferry into a state-of-the-art hospital ship, with six operating theatres, X-ray facilities and CT scanner, a pharmacy and a laboratory. There is capacity for 78 in-patients with four wards and a small intensive care unit, as well as accommodation for 450 volunteers.