



FEBRUARY

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Hannah, our Volunteer Support Coordinator has just arrived back after a wonderful week on the ship.

She flew to Cameroon to spend a week with the UK and Irish volunteers and give them the opportunity to have face-to-face contact with their HR contact in the UK office. It was an incredibly positive week and the first time Hannah has met some of the volunteers in person. Hannah managed to have one-to-ones with all 32 crew that are currently onboard and hear about their experiences. They also had the opportunity to express any concerns or just have a chat over a cup of tea. Hannah has worked twice onboard as a nurse, so she understands the unique environment that the ship is, and the challenges and joys that come from living in a tight-knit community of 400 people from more than 31 countries. Hannah loved being back onboard, as it brought back many happy memories of her time as a nurse on the ship in Sierra Leone and Togo – but it is now a privilege to be involved with Mercy Ships in a very different capacity.

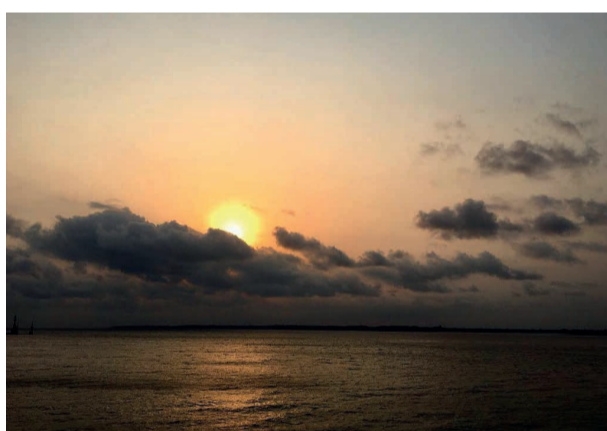


It is part of Hannah's role as the Volunteer Support Coordinator to ensure the crew feel listened to, valued and supported during their time on the ship, and not just as they prepare to go out to serve. Therefore, Hannah will continue to visit the ship yearly and give the crew the opportunity to feel directly connected to the UK office. The crew showered her in so much kindness and love, and she felt incredibly welcomed – even though it was actually her intention to make the crew feel appreciated and valued while she was there!

They ensured she had enough tea to keep her going, invited her into their cabins for meals and just generally checked in with her all week even during their busy working weeks.

Giving each volunteer a full-hour one-to-one was received very positively, and it enabled them to input into recommendations for the future of volunteer care and how we can keep improving our programme. They appreciated being asked for feedback, and knowing that their input would make a difference to the experiences of future volunteers.

Here are a few photos from her week, which included some meals together – these were split over the week, as it was impossible to get all 32 together at the same time due to work commitments – a celebration for Bill and Rachael, who both turned 60; and even a quick trip to the ward for an hour in her scrubs.



Each one of these incredible volunteers is making such an impact on the people of Cameroon in their various roles onboard. It's refreshing and helpful for them to have some time out, and the opportunity to debrief with someone who understands their situation so they can feel supported in their service in Cameroon.

"Volunteers are ordinary people with extraordinary hearts. They reach out and take a hand and together they make a difference that lasts a lifetime!"



Find us on social media [mercysipsuk](https://www.mercyshipsuk.com)

