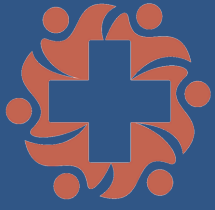


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# SERVING TOGETHER

Official Newsletter of Mission:318



## Serving Together - Dedication and Compassion

Sharing in the remarkable story of Mission:318, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering support and dedication to our shared cause. The commitment of the organization to transforming forgotten communities and providing hope through sustainable healthcare is truly inspiring, and I am honored to serve as the Executive Director of such a remarkable organization.

Reflecting on my journey with Mission:318, I am often asked what motivates me to be so committed to the organization. The answer lies in the profound impact we make in the lives of those we serve. Witnessing the transformational power of healthcare firsthand, seeing communities revitalized, and the hope restored in the eyes of individuals—these are the moments that reaffirm my belief in our mission. Mission:318's strengths lie not only in our ability to deliver healthcare but also in our commitment to sustainable change. By addressing not just immediate healthcare needs but also the underlying factors contributing to health disparities, we are laying the foundation for long-term growth and prosperity within the communities we serve.

But perhaps what sets us apart most is the dedication of our volunteers to our mission and to Christ. Their selfless service, fueled by compassion and guided by faith, is the driving force behind our work. Together, we are not just providing medical care; we are extending a hand of love and hope to those who need it most.

Let us reaffirm our commitment to the communities we serve and remember that our work is not just about providing healthcare but about standing in solidarity with those who have been forgotten and marginalized. Together, let us be beacons of hope, shining light into the darkest corners, and transforming lives one community at a time.

Thank you for your continued support, your unwavering dedication, and your boundless compassion. Together, we are making a difference.

With heartfelt gratitude,

April  
Executive Director, Mission:318

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# Putting Action Over Words: Surgical Mission Trips to Yendi, Ghana

We began 2024 with two surgical teams with forty-one team members serving at Yendi Municipal Hospital, in Yendi, Ghana. The quality of care continues to improve in Yendi, with increased availability of supplies, adequate nursing and midwifery, and the continued dedication of **Dr. Ayuba Abdulai**, **Mr. Frances Kwaku Owusu, NP**, and **Matron Beatrice Ayeleni, RN**. Over the course of the two weeks, our teams assisted in 136 surgeries and trained over 50 hospital staff.

Our first team, led by veterans **Martin Ramirez** and **Nick Collier, CRNA** consisted of fourteen team members including two surgeons - **Dr. James ssatat**, general surgeon and **Dr. Cindy Basinski**, gynecologist and urogynecologist. This team dedicated one operating room to general surgery and one to obstetrics and gynecology. Dr. Basinski continues to mentor local obstetrician, Dr. Abdulai, in fistula surgeries, and uterine prolapse repair. While in Ghana, Drs. Basinski and Abdulai perform surgeries that they have prepared for and discussed over the prior twelve months. Their relationship helps further the care provided to the women of Yendi and the surrounding communities.

“...Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”  
1 John 3:18





The second team, led by member of the board and spiritual leader, **Randall Littleton** and volunteer coordinator, **Tara Benes, NP**, consisted of twenty team members including four surgeons - **Dr. Mark Leibold**, general surgeon, **Dr. James Cassat**, general surgeon, **Dr. Patricia Limpert**, general surgeon and **Dr. Jonathan Limpert**, general surgeon. Throughout the course of the second week this team treated many patient with hernias, goiters, and perforated bowels as a result of typhoid. Our teams were supported by our dedicated and compassionate nurses, physician assistants, surgical technicians, therapists, nonclinical support, and spiritual leaders.

Both teams reported that the 2024 surgical trips were some of the most impactful trips of their lives. As an organization one of the most rewarding aspects of the 2024 surgical trips was witnessing the **operation and use of the Alicia Reine Bishop Emergency and Trauma Center**. Over the course of the past three years, Mission:318 raised funds for and helped build this life saving center at Yendi Municipal Hospital. Our heartfelt gratitude to all of our donors, volunteers, and constituents who helped make this possible.



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: DANIEL MCGEE, CRNA

*Daniel McGee, CRNA at Barnes Jewish Hospital was the recipient of the SIUE Dr. Jacquelyn M. Clement Scholarship in Nursing Endowment in 2023 and returned to serve with Mission:318 in 2024.*

## **How and why did you get involved with Mission:318?**

My involvement with Mission:318 began during my first year of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) school, where I had the privilege of attending a virtual presentation by Nick Collier, a CRNA, who shared his profound experiences with the mission. Inspired by his story, I set a goal to participate during my final year of CRNA school. As fate would have it, during my second year of anesthesia school, I had the opportunity to complete a clinical rotation at Mercy Washington, where I met individuals preparing for the Yendi mission. I was captivated by the stories they shared from previous trips.

Feeling fortunate for the opportunity to pursue a career in anesthesia, I felt a deep sense of responsibility to utilize my skills to make a difference and give back in some way. Mission:318 presented the perfect opportunity to assist those in need in a challenging environment where I could make a positive impact on the lives of people in need.

## **How many times have you traveled with Mission:318?**

To date, I have traveled with Mission:318 twice, once as a CRNA student in 2023, and again as a CRNA in 2024.

## **What do you find most rewarding about working with Mission:318?**

What I find most rewarding about working with Mission:318 is the opportunity to apply my abilities in anesthesia to make a tangible impact on the lives of the people in Yendi. Although the day-to-day work may seem routine at times, the difference it makes in the Ghanaian community is profound. Additionally, collaborating with such a dedicated team is a true honor. The Mission:318 team and the Ghanaian healthcare workers are truly inspiring.



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: DANIEL MCGEE, CRNA

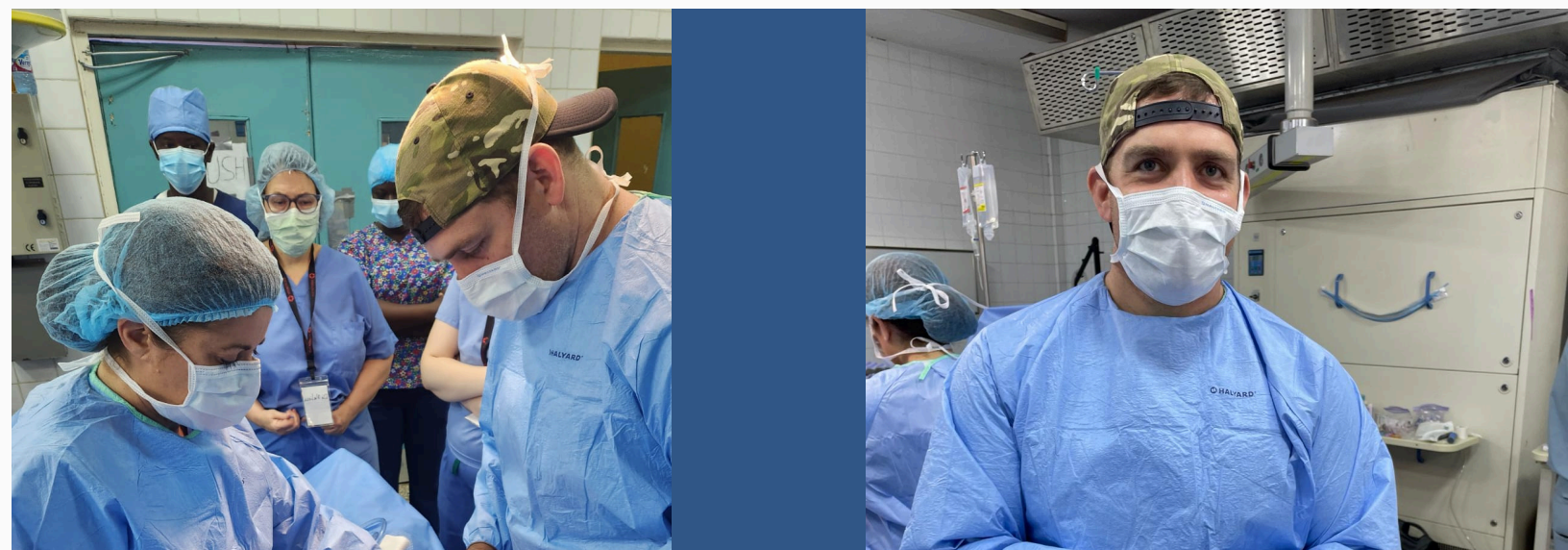


**How would you explain the working in Yendi, Ghana to someone who has never been?**

Working in Yendi is challenging yet deeply rewarding. The days are long, the heat is intense, and challenges inevitably arise. However, amidst the highs and lows, the work persists. It's a constant rollercoaster of emotions, but the team is always there to support one another. The leadership's exceptional care for each team member's physical and emotional well-being ensures that despite the difficulties, we are well taken care of.

**Is there a person/story that has made a special impact on you?**

There are so many stories and people from Ghana that have made a significant impact on me. But the most inspiring aspect of my trips to Ghana have been the Ghanaian healthcare workers who continue to show up every day. The doctors, nurses, and technicians that remain in Yendi and keep the hospital going year-round are a tremendous inspiration. Thank you for allowing me to share my experiences with Mission:318. It is truly a journey that has enriched my life in countless ways.





## Global Health Spotlight: Iodine Deficiency Leading to Goiters

Insufficient iodine intake or iodine deficiency can lead to the enlargement of the thyroid gland, also called a goiter. The deficiency is compounded by low iodine levels in soil and water, affecting the iodine content of staple foods. Insufficient consumption of iodized salt exacerbates this issue, particularly in rural areas with limited access to fortified salt.

Untreated goiters can lead to various symptoms and complications. Symptoms may include neck swelling, difficulty swallowing or breathing, hoarseness, and a visible lump in the neck. Complications can arise from the enlargement of the thyroid gland, such as compressive symptoms on nearby structures, including the trachea and esophagus, leading to breathing and swallowing difficulties. Additionally, large goiters can cause cosmetic concerns and psychological distress for affected individuals.

Furthermore, untreated goiters can result in hormonal imbalances and thyroid dysfunction, leading to conditions such as hyperthyroidism or hypothyroidism. These hormonal disturbances can manifest in symptoms such as weight changes, fatigue, heat intolerance, palpitations, and mood alterations. In pregnant women, untreated goiters can increase the risk of complications such as preterm birth, low birth weight, and developmental abnormalities in the fetus.

Thyroidectomy surgeries, performed to address severe cases of goiter, represent a significant healthcare burden in Ghana. To mitigate this problem, efforts to promote iodized salt consumption and implement iodine supplementation programs have been initiated. However, sustaining these interventions and ensuring their effectiveness, particularly in remote and underserved communities, remains a challenge. Raising awareness about the importance of iodine in the diet and the consequences of deficiency is crucial for long-term prevention and control of goiters and other iodine-related disorders in Ghana. Additionally, allocating resources to improve access to iodized salt and healthcare services, including thyroidectomy surgeries, is essential to address the underlying causes and consequences of iodine deficiency in the country.

# Upcoming Events and Opportunities to Serve

## Save the Date - September 6th, 2024 Mission:318 Lighting the Way

Lighting the Way is not just a celebration; it's an opportunity to come together to transform forgotten communities and provide hope by raising funds for the delivery of sustainable healthcare throughout the world. With your continued support, this event has enabled us to deliver life-saving surgeries, life-changing medical care, provide nurses and clinicians scholarships for medical mission trips, as well as complete the Alicia Reine Bishop Emergency and Trauma Center in Yendi, Ghana, rebuild a mother-baby clinic in Sefwi, Ghana, provide support for the CHIDA Medical Clinic in Cap Haitien, Haiti, as well as provide medications, supplies and deliver medical care alongside our newest partner, the Pujols Family Foundation in Aleman, Dominican Republic.

### Medical Mission - Dominican Republic Late Summer 2024

Contact [tbenes@mission318.com](mailto:tbenes@mission318.com) for more information.

### Surgical Mission - Yendi, Ghana January - February 2025

Contact [tbenes@mission318.com](mailto:tbenes@mission318.com) for more information.

### Medical Mission - Sefwi Bekwai - Early Winter 2024

Contact [tbenes@mission318.com](mailto:tbenes@mission318.com) for more information.

### Exploratory Partnership Mission - Maua, Kenya

All spots currently full.

Visit us at [mission318.com](http://mission318.com)