



My Medical Mission Experience – CASEC Medical Mission to Cameroon, June 2016

By Melanie, MM6 Volunteer

The Patcha Foundation CASEC Medical Missions affect people in tangible and positive ways. With each mission, there are always many stories to tell. This year I was particularly touched by the difference in how the communities served planned for and received the mission. The mission took place at 3 different sites of rural settings. One community was very grateful and willing to come out and to take full advantage of the services provided. The leaders of this community were in full support of the mission and had gone out their way to ensure that it happened and that the people benefited as much as possible. This was not the case in other communities although the people were also appreciative. As their leaders remained aloof about the mission, one thing kept ringing in my mind, AWARENESS!! If only they understood what the medical mission services would do for the people; if only they grasped the extent to which volunteers give of themselves to undertake causes like this for humanity; if only as leaders they cared even a bit; if only; if only; if only.

Despite all the work done, I am most grateful that thousands had the opportunity to be made aware of cancer, prevention and early detection; receive tips on nutrition, lifestyle choices, chronic diseases and other conditions screened and treated during the mission. People generally lack knowledge, and while the work of the foundation can be tasking, the fight must go on.

A cheerful young man helped with the logistics in Bana, the first of the mission sites, and lent a helping hand in Banka, the second site. He followed the mission all the way to Bangante, the third site. I was touched and decided to have a chat with him when I realized his mother has a serious condition which causes her not to be able to stand or seat and her surgery was scheduled for Bangante with the medical mission surgeons. Those who knew about the case all hoped the surgery can be done and her life transformed.

I pondered every time I saw him with the big smile that filled his face. He was the image of hope and appreciation of life and good health. He had all hope that his mother's life would change. To me every time I saw him, he was a reminder to thank God for the life I live and the ability to extend a helping hand; A reminder to appreciate the gift of health and the grace to extend health awareness to others.

It broke my heart to find out that the surgery could not be carried out on site because the lady was too feeble and the surgeons did not think she will survive without appropriate post operation surveillance. Though they did the little they could while on site, she was advised to go to Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon, for the surgery. The hospital in Yaounde would have better equipment than in her rural setting, and of course, it would be a very costly undertaking for her as well. Now, I wonder what value she will place on her life because it's only that value which will push her to go for the surgery. Will she or won't she?

In all things, we give glory to God and keep the patients in prayer for God to make a way and reveal Himself in special ways to each of them.