

From Ship to Shore... November 2002



Hello everyone!!

Greetings from the Caribbean Mercy! It has been a month since I left home to go work with Mercy Ships, and it has been quite a ride so far! I first went to the base in Texas for a week of safety training before I could board the ship. There I met the 15 other people in my training school for the first 5 months I am with Mercy Ships. Half of the students are from different countries (England, Wales, Mexico, Norway, Germany, and South Africa), so we have a very diverse group! Safety training was a lot of fun. The highlight was learning to fight fires, complete with fire gear and breathing apparatus!

Our group then flew to Baltimore to meet the ship. I still have trouble believing that this is my new home! I live in a 5'x7' cabin with one other girl, Tine (pronounced "Tina"). I wish someone had a camera for the moment we first saw our room...it was a shock, to say the least! Tine and I have definitely made it our own, though. The rest of the crew onboard are incredible. Everyone eats meals together, so there are plenty of opportunities to get to know one another. All together, there are about 120 people onboard right now. We are sailing to Wilmington, N.C. in two days, and then Gulfport, Miss. until after New Year's. Then we head to the Dominican Republic for a few months – the phase I'm most looking forward to!

The Discipleship Training School (DTS) is amazing. It is a 5-month long school, divided into a 3-month lecture phase and a 2-month outreach phase. During the lecture phase, a new speaker flies in to the ship each week to talk about a certain topic. So far we have talked about Jesus' humanity and Passion for God.

One thing I like about the lecture phase is that it is not solely classroom lectures. We also have "Internships", which are work duties on the ship for about 12 hours each week. I have been assigned to the computer department, and have really been enjoying it so far. I get to help out with a presentation to the President of Benin, Africa tomorrow! There are also many outreach opportunities within the towns we go to in the U.S. Here in Baltimore, we went into the Inner Harbor to feed the homeless last week.

Thanks to all of you for your continued prayers. Please continue to pray for my time here, especially in preparing for the outreach in January. The lecture phase of the DTS is a great way to make us all more effective in going into a foreign culture. I also have taken up the task of learning Spanish, so that is another prayer point. I bought a book-CD program, and there are plenty of people onboard I can "practice on"!

Love,
Katie