



## IT'S A LABOR OF LOVE.

by **Jessica Hart** - medical mission team member



There's an early 90s Julie Miller song that has been playing in my head on repeat since we started our journey back home from Liberia in January. I can hardly think about this song without tears welling in my eyes because now it means something entirely fresh and new. It has personal meaning to me about the call to

go to Liberia. I know that many others on the trip had similar calls to ministry or service as it relates specifically to this mission field.

**"What would Jesus say, what would Jesus do? Where would Jesus go?"** For years, these medical missions were the vision of many. For months, this trip was prayed for and planned. As a team, we answered His call to go to Liberia, and to serve. For some, this was the maiden voyage overseas and others were veterans.

**"We've got to go there, too. He wants to love them, love them through me, and you."** Our

team of 17 traveled to Liberia on January 20 with 12 members from Rapid City meeting up with the remaining 5 members from Arkansas, Idaho, Michigan, and Texas in Chicago. (Martin was waiting for us in Liberia.)

It was a long journey – about 30 hours, and we were delayed on every flight. We nearly missed our flight from Denver to Chicago! Of course, the Lord is faithful, and we are so thankful the airline held the flight for the 12 people traveling from Rapid City that day! The baggage claim area in Monrovia was chaos with so many men eager to help you with your luggage that it was very hard to distinguish who was legitimate.



Outside the airport, we loaded up and divided into our Surgical Team who headed to the Phebe Hospital, and our Clinic Team who stayed at Hope Village.

There were challenges along the way, particularly in Phebe with hospital administration but praise God the issues were worked through, and work began.



**"We must be His voice; we must be His hands."** The Surgical Team performed 124 surgeries, mostly removing diseased thyroids and hernia repair in 8 days. They were also able to teach with the staff at the Phebe hospital, which was an excellent added benefit for our team and the hospital staff.

The Clinic Team at Hope set up in the school and saw 734 patients in 7.5 days. We treated many cases of malaria, typhoid, high blood pressure, a few wounds, and other less serious ailments. We had the wonderful advantage of community with those who live at Hope Village and refreshing spiritual with the nightly revival services.





**“We must show His heart, so they understand.”** It’s been said so many times before, but life in Liberia is hard. Very hard. This is Yassa. She is four years old. She was abandoned by her mother in January 2023, simply left to die.

This man and his sister found her in November 2023, and have “adopted” her as their own. They love her and care for her. He told me, “I could not watch her die.” They brought her to the clinic at Hope, hoping we could help her get stronger so she would walk, talk, and be like the other children. Yassa has a sweet spirit. Despite her severe malnutrition, she knows love. We provided her with infant formula that may help nourish her body. Most importantly, we laid hands on this sweet child of God and her family which is the sustenance of the soul.

## JOSEPH GWEAH RECEIVES SURGERY FROM MEDICAL TEAM

Jospheh Gweah found himself struggling with a basketball-sized hernia for about 15-16 years. He had not been able to seek treatment due to financial constraints. In December, he heard of our medical team coming to Liberia. In January, he received surgery from our team and now can live a normal life. He is so thankful for our medical team and those that supported the initiative.



## OTHER NEWS

### ELIJAH OFFERED MAYOR OF BENSONVILLE

In January, Stephanie received a call from Elijah, the principal of Hope. He had been notified that the citizens of Bensonville wanted him to be mayor. Stephanie encouraged him to pray and seek God’s direction. He is an asset to the Hope school, and she does not have the desire to lose him as principal of the school.

However, she recognized he would gain a higher salary and a more affluent position as the mayor. A few days later, Elijah called Stephanie back saying that after praying about the situation he had declined the offer. He said he can train and educate many mayors in his position as principal at Hope, and he is confident in his calling to be the administrator of Hope International Christian Academy. We are so thankful for God’s gracious provision and the dedication of our administration and staff at Hope.



**“Brothers and sisters, we’ve got His work to do. It’s a labor of love.”** This trip was more than simply a trek halfway around the world to provide medical care, but each person’s experience is personal. I can only tell you a fraction of mine – I am captivated with Liberia – the people, the culture, their joy, and their burning desire to worship God. I am also left broken-hearted by the poverty, physical and spiritual hunger, and hurt in the nation. For me, this is not a one-time trip. This is a call. How has Liberia changed you?

