



Health Care Invasion - Fiji & Tonga

In 2013, Sea Mercy had one Floating Health Care Clinic (FHCC) working in one island nation (Tonga) providing only a medical care program for the remote islands. In 2014, we have grown to three FHCC's, working in two island nations, with three times the number of volunteers, and three programs (medical, dental and eye). In addition, we activated our Disaster Relief program and spent the first 4 months of the year providing assistance to Tonga following Cyclone Ian.

During our first rotation in Fiji, we had our FHCC vessels *Dragonfly* and *Rebelle* carry 21 volunteers to 7 remote islands. Meanwhile in Tonga, our FHCC vessel *Segue* and the volunteers joining her continued to deliver the high standard of care that she and her captains are known for. With additional rotations following these through October, Sea Mercy is on track to bring vital health care services to over 5,000 remote island citizens in 2014 and add an additional island nation partner.

We are so grateful to our captains, our volunteers, our sponsors, and our island nation partners for their support and belief in what we are doing across the South Pacific. Inside this newsletter are articles discussing our programs, the results we are seeing, new programs that are needed, and how you can join us in making a difference in the South Pacific.

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The Initial Scouting Team to the Lau Group in Fiji (21 team members and three specialties)

Documentary Update

We had the pleasure of having an award winning writer and director, Dave Carroll (www.suspectfilms.com), join us to film a documentary about Sea Mercy and our efforts in the South Pacific. Whether he was riding on the dingy into shore, filming a tooth extraction, Kava ceremony, or an incredible sunset, Dave and his camera was always there to capture the moment.



Dave experienced firsthand what each Sea Mercy volunteer and captain experiences on a rotation, and what challenges and obstacles the thousands of neglected remote island citizens face each day of their lives. It was great to have Dave with us and we look forward to seeing the end product of his efforts and the impact it will have on the South Pacific.

Fiji Report The Lau Group

When you take 21 health care professionals from three different specialties (dental, vision, and medical) and put them all together on two vessels for 14 days, you would think it would be a recipe for disaster. We are happy to report that it was an amazing rotation and the entire group worked and played nice the entire time. It really was a wonderful experience that allowed us to explore and treat not only the medical, but the dental and vision needs of these neglected remote islanders and prepare and plan for future programs.

“Seeing” is believing

Following the initial rotation, Dr. Neatrou (ophthalmologist) and his family who have done extensive international medical missions work, also spent 2 weeks in the Lau Group diagnosing and providing care (and glasses) to over 500 remote islanders. With the information gathered by Dr. Neatrou and the initial team, Sea Mercy will be scheduling surgical teams to deliver corrective and restorative surgeries to those islanders whose vision cannot be corrected with eyeglasses alone.

Restoring smiles to the remote islanders

Corrective and preventative dental care is vital to the health and future of every child and adult on the thousands of remote islands across the South Pacific. The current dental care services limited, limiting our services to emergency extractions.



As is the desire of the Fiji Health Ministry, Sea Mercy is committed to bringing the necessary talent and equipment to these remote islanders to help preserve their healthy teeth, and to offer corrective services for their damaged teeth. We hope you can join us on a future rotation.



Dave Carroll, Writer/Director

Sea Mercy Fleet

Not only does Sea Mercy have some of the best vessels operating in the South Pacific, we also have the best Captains and First Mates dedicated to guiding you to some of the most amazing places and peoples on earth.

REBELLE- 45' Catamaran, Xavier & Amanda Zeitoun

DRAGONFLY - 65' Catamaran, Al & Jill Wigginton

SEGUE- 55' Catamaran, Colin & Mercedes Dykstra

SEA RAVEN - 60' Catamaran, Terry & Sabine White

Visit the above FHCC vessel pages online to learn more about each vessel and crew.



Guess who can finally see the chalkboard in class? Glasses can change a life forever!

Tonga Report

Imagine watching the reaction of a child or young woman who has not been able to see the leaves on a tree, a nearby island, or even the words written on a chalkboard in class suddenly experiencing those moments. The joy and amazement is always so rewarding for the Sea Mercy volunteers and captains at each remote island stop. The eye care program was just one of our programs that are changing lives.

Disaster Relief - In 2014 Sea Mercy played a huge role in delivering Disaster Relief aid to the remote islands of Ha'apai following Cyclone Ian. Working directly with the Emergency Response and Health Ministry teams in Tonga, from February through the beginning of May our FHCC's vessels *Rebelle* and *Segue* delivered essential food, water, supplies and medical supplies to where it was needed most.

Eye Care - Later in May, we began our standard FHCC operations, delivering medical care and our internationally based health care volunteers to those same remote islands. In July, we were able to include the new Eye Care program (Eyejusters) to our rotations and saw the immediate impact they had on the sight and happiness of those in need. We are looking to add ophthalmology rotations to future rotations in order to discover and diagnose those who have eye issues that can be corrected through surgery in 2015.

Dental Care - We currently do not have any dental teams scheduled for Tonga due to a shortage of available dental volunteers. We will be focusing heavily on encouraging dental teams to join us in Tonga and in Fiji in 2015. Please help us to accomplish this by asking your local dentist to consider joining a rotation in 2015. Your help and their help will make a huge difference in the lives of many (perhaps even their own).



Vessels and accommodations!





Our partners are making a difference in the Eye Care of the South Pacific

Eye Care Program Update

In addition to the provisioning of reading glasses and sunglasses for the remote island citizens, we have added the Eyejusters glasses to help us address the near-sighted issues that many people have. These three eye care solutions helps each islander to be more productive, engaged and protected from the sun's sight damaging rays. When the reading and near-sighted glasses fail to correct a persons vision, there are often more serious issues going on that can only be corrected with surgery.

Dr. Royce Fonken, Sea Mercy's Eye Care Director, is focusing our 2014 teams on testing, screening and identifying those patients who's eyesight can be restored, corrected or enhanced through surgery. With his deep knowledge and medical missions experience in the field of Ophthalmology, he has developed a comprehensive program that will help meet the unique and needs of the remote islanders that Sea Mercy visits. Evaluation and treatment services that includes:

- * **Cataract Surgery**
- * **Pediatric Ophthalmology**
- * **Retinal Disease**
- * **Corneal Disease**
- * **Glaucoma**
- * **Ophthalmic Reconstructive Surgery**

Diabetes and Cataracts

With Diabetes so prevalent in the South Pacific, the importance of early diagnosis and treatment can help save the eye sight of hundreds, if not thousands of remote islanders. Cataract blindness is all too common around the world, especially in areas far from medical care. It causes a lifetime of incredible misery to those affected and their loved ones. Fortunately, complete and permanent restoration of vision is possible with a 15 minute surgery which can be performed anywhere in the world. Ophthalmologists, optometrists, and eye care assistants, please come and join us in the South Pacific!

Scenic Hotels

Our dear friends at Scenic Hotels have stepped forward to help us meet a need in the South Pacific by being a key sponsor of our Eye Care Program. Providing over 750 pairs of Eyejuster glasses for Sea Mercy to deliver to those in need.

If you are traveling to New Zealand or Tonga, be sure to stay at one of their incredible hotels.

www.scenichotels.co.nz



Thank you Scenic Hotels!

Karmoie

Through Eyejusters' "Give and Get" program, Karmoie (Lars & Kirsten Iversen) has donated to several projects in Africa. For every pair of sunglasses their customers purchase, a pair of Eyejusters is donated to one of these projects. In 2014, Sea Mercy was selected to be their first program in the South Pacific and have provided us with 300 pair of Eyejuster glasses.

If you are in need of a pair of incredible attractive and stylish sunglasses, be sure to visit their online collection at:

www.karmoie.com



Thank you Lars & Kirsten Iversen!

Dental Care Program Directors

Scott & Sarah have been on the front lines of dental missions work since 2004. As practicing dentists, they have always made time to serve those less fortunate (both locally and internationally). They have traveled extensively to deliver dental care to those in need in Honduras, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Mexico. Most recently, Sarah returned from a 2-week rotation in Fiji with Sea Mercy. Little did Sarah and Scott know, but that one rotation would have a major impact on both the Levison's and on Sea Mercy.

We are honored and happy to announce the appointment of Dr.'s Scott & Sarah Levison (DMD) as the Dental Care Program Directors for Sea Mercy. Using their medical missions expertise and first hand experience working from Sea Mercy's FHCC vessels, Scott and Sarah will take the lead on the current development and enhancement of the Dental Program Sea Mercy provides for the South Pacific.

Please welcome them into the Sea Mercy family and leadership. Amazing things are about to happen in the South Pacific.



Dr.'s Scott & Sarah Levison



Early preventative care and education is essential, but we need your help

Dental Care Program

The greatest need on the remote islands of the South Pacific is not having an effective and consistent Dental Care program (Sea Mercy has it), it's finding dental professionals willing to help deliver it. Due to low pay and opportunities, there is a huge talent drain (migration) of dental professionals from the island nations to first world countries. Although their primary islands often have the dental infrastructure to consistently evaluate and treat tooth decay, their remote islanders have rare access to such services. This poses a major public health problem in terms of pain, premature loss of teeth and even the risk of death due to infections. As a result, they are in desperate need of dental professionals who are willing to volunteer with Sea Mercy (2 weeks) to deliver care to their remote islands.

Sea Mercy's Dental Program provides the needed implementation and monitoring of a tooth decay control program. Although diet and lifestyles strategies are a part of Sea Mercy's programs and important for long-term health needs, the implementation of proven modern preventative programs like the use of fluorides and 'fissure sealants' will help us to quickly transition from an endless focus on extractions, to restoration treatments and repair programs.

We are currently gathering the necessary funds to purchase the equipment (generator and portable all-in-one dental unit) to provide the restoration and repair programs needed for each vessel. Whether it's pulling an infected tooth on a remote island beach (see below photo), or filling a cavity while operating from a portable unit, we are in desperate need of dental professionals to join us in Fiji, Tonga and across the South Pacific. **Please pass the word and encourage your dentist to join us and give someone a reason to smile.**



Republic of Fiji

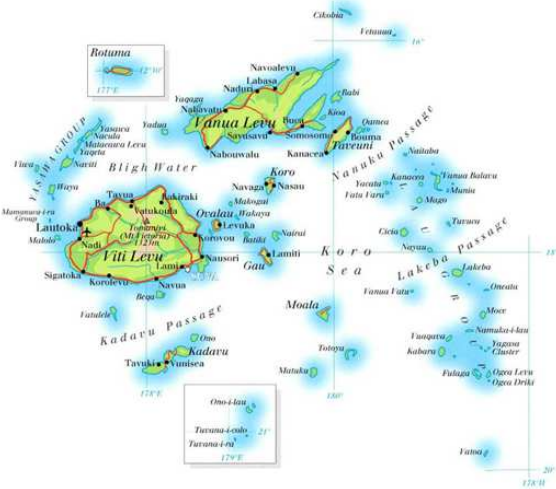
With a population of nearly 1 million and over 300 remote islands, of which over 100 are permanently inhabited, Fiji is one of our largest island nation partners. Due to size and distance, we will be operating two FHCC's in order to effectively serve their remote islands citizens on a consistent basis.

There are two remote island groups that Sea Mercy will be focusing on in Fiji; the islands in the entire Lau Group south of Nanuku Passage and the Yasawa Group northwest of the main island of Viti Levu. We are also evaluating additional areas that would require "special" rotations to meet the needs. In the Lau Group we are currently exploring options to base operations from Lakeba (sailing north or south as needed), while in the Yasawa Group, we will base out of Nadi and sail northwest.

Available Rotations in Fiji:

2014 - 2 FHCC Vessels, 14 rotations, from July – October

2015 - 2 FHCC Vessels, 30 rotations, April—October



Kingdom of Tonga

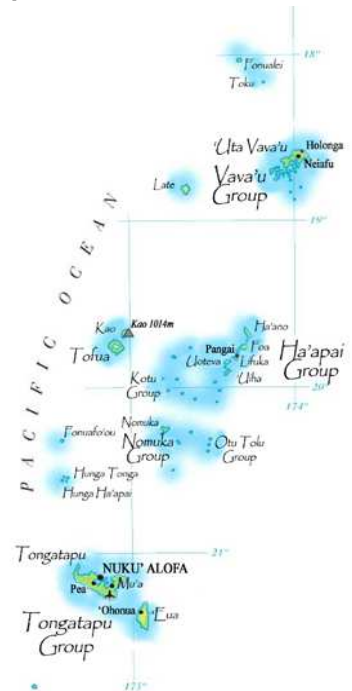
Although smaller in population (100,000), Tonga has over 170 remote islands, of which 50 are permanently inhabited. After spending 2013 in Tonga, we have determined that one FHCC vessel can reach all the remote islands within our desired 45-60 day time period.

There are two main remote island groups that Sea Mercy will be focusing on in Tonga; the Ha'apai Group located 100 miles north of the main island of Tongatapu, and the Vava'u group located 250 miles north of the main island. Each rotation will be starting in either Pangai in Ha'apai, or Neiafu in Vava'u where the rotation will spend the next 12 days visiting as many remote islands as possible in each island group.

Available Rotations in Tonga:

2014 - 1 FHCC Vessel, 14 rotations, from April – October

2015 - 1 FHCC Vessel, 15 rotations, from April - October



Our 2 Week Rotations

With three FHCC vessels operating in 2014, and five scheduled for 2015, our desired rotation types and volunteers will be medical (40%), dental (40%) and ophthalmology (20%). Each consisting of a balanced team of 4 to 8 professionals for each rotation (i.e. doctor, nurse, physicians assistant, and pharmacist) and will include two local island health care professionals who will be working with you and acting as translators when needed.

Volunteers are selected based on experience, physical ability, and attitude then submitted to the island nations for work approval. Each rotation is a balance of patient care, sailing, and enjoying the incredible sights, people and culture of the South Pacific. Operating from a vessel is challenging work, but will prove to be the best "working holiday" that you will ever experience.

Register Online through the **2015 Assignment Request Form** (www.seamercy.org/node/47) to reserve your rotation date (single or as part of a team).

Become a Sea Mercy Program Sponsor

Whether you are a hotel, an eye glass company, an eyewear company, or an organization or individual who just wants to help make a difference in the world, it starts with you. Give us a call or send us an email letting us know how you can help.

Here are a few suggestions and needs we have at Sea Mercy:

Dental Care Program:

- Dental forceps
- Aspirating Syringe
- Dental Needles
- Explorers
- Mirrors
- Gloves/Masks/Bibs
- Topical*
- Lidocaine*
- Gauze
- Oral Rinse
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste

Eye Care Program:

- Replaced/Used Equipment
- Glasses
- Tools
- Excess Supplies

Medical Care Program:

- Stethoscope
- Blood Pressure Cuffs
- Optical Scope Kits
- Medical Supplies
- Vitamins
- Glucometers Strips
- Medicines*

* Please call or email us to arrange any equipment or medicine donations.

FHCC Vessel Needs:

- Electronics
- Sail repair equipment
- Vessel hardware
- Maintenance donations

If you have an item or suggestion that could assist us on our rotations, please call or email to discuss them with us.

**Thank you for
your support!**

Become a partner today!

Tropical Medicine Elective

Elective Programs for Independent Study and International Medicine

Residency Elective Programs

The Tropical Medicine Elective is a partnership between Sea Mercy and the *Palmetto Health Emergency Medicine Residency Program* that provides a unique educational experience in international medicine.

Objectives

1. Provide medical care to include health screening, preventative care, maintenance of chronic conditions, and treatment of acute illnesses.
2. Participate in teaching local staff.
3. Learn about tropical diseases specific to the South Pacific islands and apply this knowledge to patient care.
4. Develop competence in low-cost interventions to treat common medical conditions.
5. Develop competence in the practice of medicine in a resource-limited environment.
6. Develop administrative and leadership skills necessary for the practice of international medicine.
7. Learn about health care delivery in the Polynesian culture.

Requirements

1. Applicants must have a license to practice medicine. Limited or restricted licenses may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
2. Residents from all specialties are encouraged to apply.
3. Applicants must be in good standing in their residency program.
4. Medical students may apply; they must be accompanied by a supervising physician.
5. Minimum elective time is 2 weeks.
6. Applicants can bring a spouse or family member to join them, but they will be expected to participate in all activities.

For More Information

To participate in this **Tropical Medicine Elective** program, or to provide it for your residency program, please contact:

Peyton Hassinger, MD

Medical Director & Residency Coordinator, Sea Mercy

Emergency Physician, Carolina Care

Wilderness Medicine Faculty, Palmetto Health Department of Emergency Medicine

peyton.hassinger@gmail.com

Supporting Sea Mercy

There are so many ways that an individual, company, or organization can support Sea Mercy and our goals to deliver free health care services to the remote islanders in the South Pacific whom do not have access to even basic services. Here are the primary ways you can help:

1. **Volunteer**
2. **Sponsor a Program**
3. **Sponsor a Volunteer**
4. **Sponsor a Rotation**
5. **Open Gift & In-kind Donations to Sea Mercy**

Volunteer

Our greatest need is finding volunteers who are willing and able to join us on one of our many FHCC rotations. Health care and non-health care professionals are welcome. Register online or send us an email letting us know your interested.

Sponsor a Program

Whatever your passion may be (medical, dental, eye care, diabetes or disaster relief), each of our programs are self funded and exist because there are individuals and organizations who are willing to support them with their financial and technical assistance. If there is a program on your heart, please contact us to learn how you can help us grow the program to its maximum potential.

Sponsor a Volunteer

Our volunteers are the heart and soul of Sea Mercy. They literally donate their time, talents and money for 2 weeks in order to serve those in need. Each volunteer pays their own airfare and the room and board for the 2 weeks they are on one of our FHCC vessels. If you would like to help make a volunteers dream of serving with Sea Mercy in the South Pacific come true, then make a donation to our scholarship page (anonymously or public).

Sponsor a Rotation

It is our continual goal to find ways to reduce the per volunteer cost for each rotation while operating at a break even structure for each rotation. Individuals and employers can help sponsor a rotation(s). All sponsor donations are used to reduce the per volunteer costs on that selected rotation. In return, we provided a sponsor listing in the Rotation Sponsor section of our website and also announce it on our Facebook page. This is a great way to say thank you to a group of volunteers.

Open Gift & In-Kind Donations To Sea Mercy

There are so many needs that each open gift or in-kind donation can be used to meet that we cannot list all of them here. As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, what we can promise is that the open gift and in-kind gifts will be used to the best of our ability to meet the needs at hand. Whether medical supplies, solar panels, generators, beds, boats, etc., we will evaluate each donation to determine how best to maximize the use or value of it. If you would like to contribute to Sea Mercy please use the our PayPal link (website) for online cash donations, or contact us directly to arrange for donations through other channels.

Contact Us

Send us an email for more information about our programs

Sea Mercy

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Australia Contact

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Visit us on the web at

www.seamercy.org

Volunteer

To be a Sea Mercy Volunteer, visit our website and click on the button link



www.seamercy.org/node/47

Donate

To make a financial donation to Sea Mercy go to the **Partnership** section and click on the below Donate button

[Donate](#)

