UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE MANIZALES
UAM
VIGILADA MINEDUCACIÓN

ON THE Mercy Ships

An interview with Dr. Leo Cheng

Q: Can you tell us what the Mercy Ships are and what kind of work they do?

Dr. Cheng: Mercy Ships run a hospital ship that brings world-class surgical and medical services to people in countries where there is a need. The organization Mercy Ships was started by Don and Deyon Stephens. Don and Deyon were caught in the Caribbean during a huge tropical storm, which caused a lot of devastation. There was a girl sitting beside them, and she was shaking – very cold – and praying for a ship to come and help the injured and sick, and to bring supplies to rebuild the hospitals and schools and so on. That gave them their vision, and since 1978, Mercy Ships has been doing just that – bringing hope and healing and rebuilding lives. If Don and Deyon hadn't been caught in that storm, they might not have had the idea for the Mercy Ships.

Q: So, what do you do on the Mercy Ships? Can you tell us about your work?

Dr. Cheng: I trained as a dentist, then a doctor, and then a general surgeon. I specialize in the head and neck areas, and I remove benign lumps or tumors. Here in the UK, it takes half an hour to treat a patient, but the problem in many developing countries is that a small lump doesn't get treated, so it grows into something enormous. That's something that we don't see here.

Q: If you hadn't worked on the Mercy Ships, do you think you'd be a different person today?

Dr. Cheng: Definitely. I would be a very different person. When I first went to work for Mercy Ships, my life changed. Everybody is there to offer service to others. We do not get a salary. We do not have a pension. We have to pay our own expenses to travel out there, which is not cheap.

Q: How does your work change people's lives? Can you give me an example?

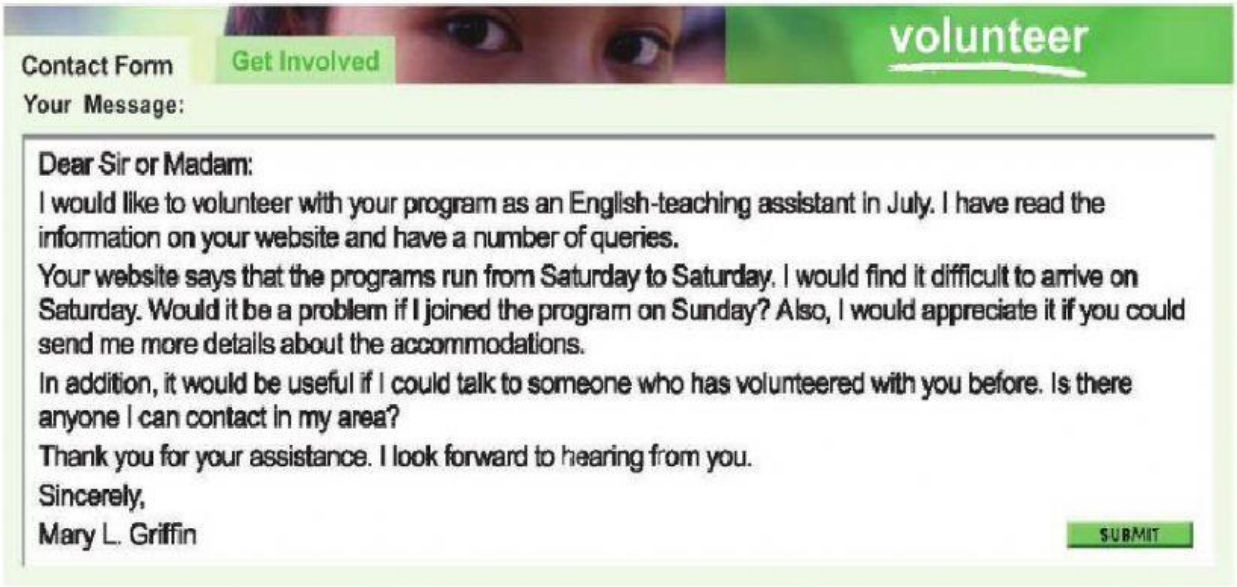
Dr. Cheng: Well, let me tell you about a grandmother who came to the ship, and then you'll understand how the surgery changed her life. This woman had a large growth on her neck. She realized that her grandchildren were no longer sitting on her lap, and she was devastated and spent all her time alone. Her only wish was that her grandchildren would sit on her lap again. The night before surgery, she said, "I'm so looking forward to hugging my grandchildren and to putting them on my knee again." And obviously, to her, that was her pride and joy. The surgery brought joy back into her life. There are a lot of stories like that.

Mercy Ships is an international charity that provides free medical care and humanitarian aid. Over the last 30 years, it has worked in more than 70 countries, performed over 56,000 surgeries, and completed more than 1,000 community-development projects focusing on water, sanitation, and agriculture and impacting about 2.9 million people.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

UNIT 5: CHALLENGES

WRITING: Write an email inquiry to a volunteer program. Read the model.



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LIVEWORKSHEETS