

Royesville School project completed

May 19, 2006

The Royesville Central School transformed from a looted building shell into a roofed, painted and furnished schoolhouse, becoming one Liberian community's testimony of God's faithfulness over time. Mercy Ships crew celebrated the completion of the project alongside town leadership and community members. Education is viewed as one key to improving Liberia's post-war condition by many who spoke during the opening ceremonies.

"There was no roof. There was no windows. There was nothing. There was an empty hole," said teacher Olivia Stryker, who explained that school continued during construction, because the children had been out of school for fifteen years. They moved to different ends of the property, holding class under tarps, as they watched the building change around them. Mercy Ships crew did teacher training workshops and held Bible studies with the teachers,



and the vision for the school grew. "We are hoping that from this elementary section that our school will grow to at least a high school," Stryker said.

Two hundred children from Royesville and beyond stand to benefit from the facility. Jens Schierbecker, head of Community Development Services on the Anastasis, said he was impressed with the way the community stepped in to get involved with Mercy Ships. Schierbecker commended the combined efforts that led to the completion of the project.

“There are many, many more things to come. My prayer is that it just be the start of it for this building, for this community,” Schierbecker said.

As ribbons were cut, crew mingled with community co-workers, and all celebrated together. Albert Martin, a Royesville resident who received a surgery on board the Anastasis, sold wood carvings at the school playground as the day progressed. He said the ship’s assistance



with the school had massive implications for the community and anticipated the opportunities it affords the children.

“God knows how thankful we are, because maybe we would not have gotten this school. Thank you very much. (It) will help our children to be educated. We pray that Mercy Ships come back,” Martin said.

