

# *Laura Louie Hope Projects*



December 1, 2013

Dear Friends & Supporters,

It's hard to believe that another year has gone by so quickly and that it's time for our annual newsletter. It's been busy, exciting, exhilarating and challenging!

The year started with us visiting the Mae On Project in February and March. It's been almost 10 years since the project began and Unchalee has been doing a wonderful job of overseeing and running the clinic.

We had initially trained 2 nurses and then another 4 nurses a few years later. Unfortunately all the nurses started to leave our program due to the fact that one nurse got married and moved, while others took on other responsibilities in the hospital and so they were unable to continue at the acupuncture clinic. However, Unchalee has been the heart and soul of the program and has taken on the Mae On Project's acupuncture clinic head on.

Unchalee continues to provide exceptional care to the patients coming for acupuncture and sees both people living with HIV and the public. Sarinee and Wanida, our acupuncture staff volunteers, help Unchalee at the clinic providing Chinese massage, moxibustion and emotional support to the patients.



**Photo (left):** The beautiful Unchalee that makes the acupuncture clinic and Mae On Project possible. Thank you Unchalee for all of your hard work and dedication!

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This year Unchalee had many visitors to the HIV/AIDS acupuncture clinic at Mae On Hospital. Visitors included a nursing group from the Messiah College in the USA, a group from the HIV/AIDS International course from Mahadol University in Bangkok as well as government officials working in HIV/AIDS care from Myanmar.

In addition, Unchalee presented several poster and booth displays on the use of acupuncture for people living with HIV and AIDS throughout Thailand.



**Photo (left):** Here I am with Unchalee helping her attach the electrostimulation machine to the acupuncture needles. It's a fantastic treatment for pain!

**Photo (above):** Here is the acupuncture clinic at Mae On Hospital in full swing.



**Photo (left):** Here I am with Songsak. He is one of the first HIV positive patients we saw when we started the acupuncture clinic at Mae On Hospital in 2004. Songsak is amazing!! He has been positive for over 20 years now and looks incredible!! I think it's the best I've ever seen him. Songsak really takes care of himself by watching his diet, coming for acupuncture as needed, taking some natural supplements as well as anti-retroviral therapy. However, I feel that the greatest healing comes from all the laughter. Songsak is always laughing and telling jokes!! As soon as we see him we all have huge smiles on our faces. What a joy it is!

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**Photo (left):** Here we are at the acupuncture clinic at Mae On Hospital. The middle three ladies make the clinic rock! From left to right: Tee (our interpreter), Wanida (acupuncture assistant), Sarinee (acupuncture assistance), Unchalee (nurse extraordinaire) and me!



**Photo (above):** Dr Nopporn Pathanapornpundh is the hospital administrator and also works as a hospital doctor. He is extremely supportive of the Mae On Project. Without Dr. Nopporn's help the acupuncture clinic would have never existed and would never had helped so many. Thank you Dr. Nopporn!!

**Photo (right):** Jeed always makes me laugh so much. Jeed was one of the first nurses trained in acupuncture at Mae On Hospital. Here we are discussing the fact that my hand is the same size as her foot!! Really!!



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The Darjeeling Project was challenging this year. We were scheduled to go to India this fall but had to cancel the trip due to the political situation in the Darjeeling district. At the beginning of August a huge general strike was evoked which closed off all roads to and from this area of India. They were protesting to get their own state. With this general strike all schools were shut down and all student boarders were sent back to their hometowns. All businesses, offices and banks were closed including all ATMs. They had rotating day and evening curfews. Although the strike was relaxed a couple of times we made the decision to postpone the trip to the Darjeeling project until February 2014 because of uncertainty of the situation and possibility of violence.

With this sudden change of plans it allowed us to spend more time with the Mae On Project, which has been a great gift. We saw a patient we haven't seen for 3 years and who was one of our initial patients back in 2004. We were so happy to see that these old patients were still using the clinic when they have a problem.

Our big news is that we are going to help the hospital build another addition, which will house all the public health clinics they run weekly. Currently they have restricted space to run these much needed clinics, which make it difficult. The clinics will work on a rotating basis in the space and provide outpatient service to diabetics, patients with hypertension, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and psychiatric problems as well as children's health including immunizations and well child clinics. We are so pleased and excited about being able to help in this way!



**Photo (upper left):** Unchalee discussing the plans for the new addition with the contractor.

**Photo (upper right and left):** Well children's clinic. It will be so wonderful to have a larger space to run these important public health clinics at Mae On Hospital.

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We wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season. Thank you for your continued support and for giving so many hope.

With much gratitude and appreciation,

*Laura*

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**Photo above (left to right):** Here we are enjoying a dinner out. Tee (our interpreter), Jeed (one of the initial nurses trained in acupuncture at the Mae On Hospital), Yai (a dentist at the hospital); Maki (director of her own Japanese NGO. Maki does incredible work with the poor and underprivileged. Every week she brings HIV positive patients to the acupuncture clinic); Unchalee and me!!



For more information on these projects and how to make a donation, please visit our website at [www.LauraLouieHopeProjects.org](http://www.LauraLouieHopeProjects.org). For donations of more than \$50, you will receive a charitable tax receipt (Canadian residents only).

**Your charitable donations will help to make a dramatic difference in the quality of life of many resource-poor people.**