

Laura Louie Hope Projects



November 29, 2015

Dear Friends & Supporters,

We are always surprised at how fast time goes by. Do you feel that too? Already it's been another year since our last annual newsletter. This year has been spectacular!

The year started with us visiting the Mae On Project in Chiang mai, Thailand in early February. We are proud to announce that the acupuncture clinic at Mae On Hospital has been running weekly for over 11 years through the integrity and dedication of the amazing Unchalee. Unchalee has been the main visionary behind this success. Although we had trained 7 nurses, only Unchalee remains because of her dedication to her patients. She understands how the acupuncture can be integrated into allopathic medicine and has seen first hand the success it has with her patients. Not only does Unchalee do all the acupuncture but she also manages all the accounting and buying of supplies for the acupuncture clinic. These days the clinic runs seamlessly and successfully without us. It is truly sustainable by Unchalee and her supporters. We are incredibly grateful to have Unchalee as part of our team.



Photo (above left): The amazing Unchalee!



Photo (above right): This is a photo of the Mae On Project team and two of our first clients from 2004, looking extremely healthy. One has remarried. Unchalee is in the centre with Wanida to her right and Sarinee to her left, both acupuncture assistants.

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Photo (left): Unchalee doing acupuncture at the Mae On Hospital. Note the stop watch we use for treatment times.

Photo (above): Photo of Maki's team with my interpreter Tee (back row in the striped sweater) and myself. Maki works with underprivileged people from the villages and does incredible work. Here she is bringing two of her clients (in front row) for acupuncture treatment. These clients have been coming regularly for approximately 5 years. Maki is in the centre back row.

After Thailand we went in mid-February to the Darjeeling project in Kalimpong, a rural town in NE India, to continue our acupuncture training. Last year we trained 4 new nurses and 1 doctor in basic medical protocol acupuncture. Unfortunately the clinic was not running regularly since the first training because of a number of factors but mainly because the nurses were too busy. However, Ramit and Ashmita, two of the nurses who we initially trained in February 2011, were still giving acupuncture, when they had time, to in-patients as well as out-patients.

In fact, our intention for doing acupuncture training with the nurses was two-fold. One, was to provide an effective modality for the community to treat pain. In this rural area of India, there is little treatment for pain except medications. And two, to provide these nurses with a skill for income generation. You see even though we call the women trained in acupuncture 'nurses', none of them are formally trained. They are all poor women from the villages and are trained on-site at the hospital. So when these young women get married and move to their husband's village, our hope was that they would have a skill to supplement their income. And in fact, the traditional Chinese massage training has been the best for that.

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Photo (left): Here Marmit, one of the new trainees is learning traditional Chinese massage, specifically a technique called rolling. We were very impressed how easily she picked up the technique.

Photo (below): Here the nurses are reviewing acupuncture point locations for knee pain. Look at their concentration! From left to right: Sanchamit, Marmit, Anita and Ramit.



Photo (left): Here I am with the nurses and you can see in the middle is Sunita with her little baby girl. Sunita was one of the first nurses to be trained in acupuncture. She has left the hospital since getting married and having a child. Sunita hasn't been able to use her acupuncture or massage skills for income generation as the baby is still too young. On the other hand, Ashmita, to my left, has been sponsored to go to nursing school in another town. Ashmita challenged the first year of nursing school with an exam and passed. She is now in second year. It just shows you the excellent hands-on training that the young women get at the Adarsha Nursing Home where we have our acupuncture clinic.

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In early September we went back to the Mae On Project in Thailand to check on how the acupuncture clinic was going and provide any needed support. As expected, Unchalee was doing an excellent job!

In mid-September, we returned to Kalimpong to continue the training. This time we were delighted to hear that they had been running the acupuncture clinic weekly and had 4 to 5 regular patients. All of this would not be possible without Pasangkit, a retired military nurse, in fact a colonel, who we had trained last time. It was Dr. Gyalmit's incredible insight to have Pasangkit join the training and the team. Although Dr. Gyalmit took the acupuncture training, we knew she wouldn't be managing the clinic as she was too busy.

Pasangkit, volunteers her time at the acupuncture clinic and is amazing at supporting the nurses not only with acupuncture but also their personal daily struggles. She is constantly counselling them. Pasangkit also manages the acupuncture clinic which includes scheduling and organizing all the supplies. Without the kindness of Pasangkit, the acupuncture clinic would not be possible. In addition, Pasangkit is a pillar of support of this small community. She and her husband, sponsor the education of three young underprivileged women and one underprivileged man who also live with them. What an inspirational woman!



Photo (above): Dr. Gyalmit with her two beautiful daughters. Of course, without Dr. Gyalmit, the acupuncture clinic would not exist. She is a true supporter of the clinic and comes for regular treatments. Both daughters plan on going to medical school so that they can help their mother with the hospital duties.

Photo (left): The incredible Pasangkit in her traditional Lepcha dress! Without her help the acupuncture clinic at the Adarsha Nursing Home (hospital) would not be possible.

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One older, very poor woman we had seen and treated 5 months ago, who had terrible swelling and pain in both knees for over a year and could barely walk, came to the first day of acupuncture clinic. We were amazed at how much she had improved. There was no swelling in her knees and she was now able to walk on her own with only a cane. This patient had been coming almost every week for 5 months and it reminded me again of the power of regular acupuncture treatments and loving care. You see besides teaching them acupuncture, we also have been teaching them about the power of truly caring about your patients and how this alone can have profound affects.



Photo (left): This is where the patient with the knee pain described above lives, in a very small one room home with no electricity and no running water. And despite her hardships, she is very cheerful and kind.



Photo (above): Here are the nurses on our last day of clinic. One of our patients said he keeps coming back because of all the pretty nurses!! In fact, he has been coming weekly for 6 months and has had incredible improvement in his chronic neck pain which he has had for more than 20 years. This patient had tried all sorts of therapies with no results until he came to the acupuncture clinic here. He is thrilled and so are we!!

The acupuncture training in September/October went really, REALLY well. With consistent supervision and support, the nurses got better and better with acupuncture point selection, technique and location, Chinese massage, history intake, draping and positioning of the patient so much so that I would have thought they were doing acupuncture professionally. We are so grateful!

In September, Dr. Gyalmit, brought two new nurses to help as acupuncture assistants. Their job is to take the acupuncture needles out, do moxibustion and traditional Chinese massage. The two new trainees, Marmit and Sanchmit did really well. The others nurses had already been

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teaching them about all these techniques and with some fine tuning and supervision, they grasped the methods quickly and easily.

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

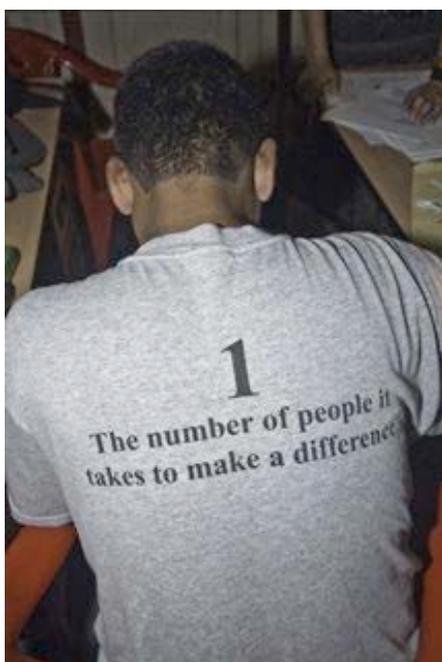
With much gratitude and appreciation,

Laura

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Photo above: Here we are on our last day of acupuncture clinic in October of this year. The nurses love to get dressed up in traditional clothing for our final day. They are so beautiful that we almost didn't recognize them from their daily nurse uniforms. From left to right: Anita, Ramit, Me, Pasangkit, Dr. Gyalmit, Marmit, Sanchamit and Chanda. What a spectacular team we have!! And thank you for supporting these amazing underprivileged women to learn these valuable acupuncture and massage skills!!



For more information on these projects and how to make a donation, please visit our website at 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.