

Laura Louie Hope Projects



November 15, 2017

Dear Friends & Supporters,

We can't believe another year has gone by so quickly. This past year has been everything from challenging to heart breaking to exciting and successful. Let us explain.

This year started with us visiting The Mae On Project in Chiang Mai, Thailand. It has been running for twelve years successfully and every year we tell you it's because of one very special nurse named Unchalee.

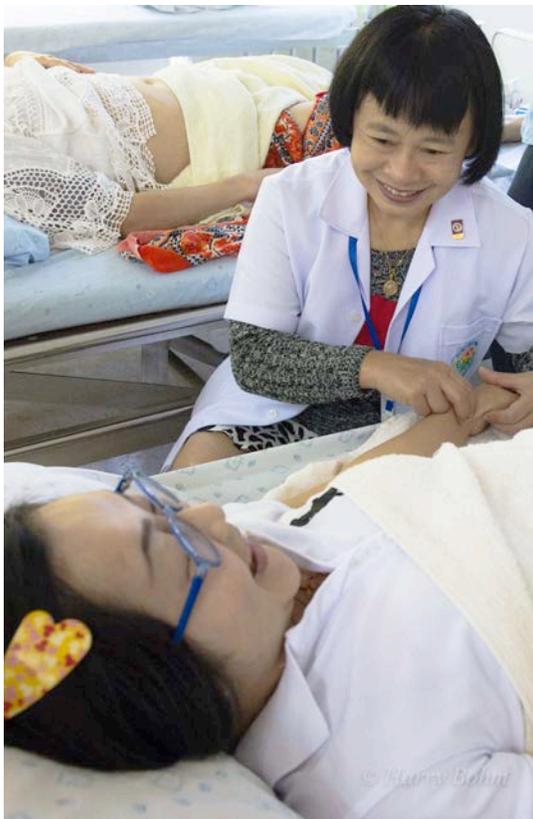


Photo (left): Here is the amazing Unchalee taking the pulse of a patient before acupuncture treatment. Incidentally this patient has been coming to the acupuncture clinic regularly since 2004.

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We wish you could all meet Unchalee and see this absolutely amazing woman in action. She is the head nurse of the HIV department and public health department of this small, rural community-based hospital which just on its own is no small feat. Unchalee also takes care of her mother who is in her late eighties and requires kidney dialysis and other treatments (including acupuncture and massage) which Unchalee arranges. Somehow Unchalee is also able to fit running the acupuncture clinic into this very busy schedule. Why? Because she is that dedicated to helping others and Unchalee knows acupuncture works!



Photo (above): Here is Unchalee in action at the acupuncture clinic with Sarinee, one of the acupuncture assistants helping her. Sarinee is breaking open the acupuncture needle packaging to make it easier and faster for Unchalee.



Photo (above): Here I am with the acupuncture team at Mae On Hospital. From left to right – Me, Wanida (acupuncture assistant), Sarinee (acupuncture assistant) and Unchalee. In the background is a sink and hand cloths. Instead of using paper towels, the team opted for cloth hand towels which they can reuse.

One of our concerns was that the new hospital administrator would not be interested in the acupuncture clinic and therefore not give Unchalee time to the run the clinic. We found out this new hospital administrator was trained in acupuncture and is thinking of expanding access to acupuncture which was such great news.

Just this year Unchalee told me that they had 70 medical visitors in one day visiting the hospital and the acupuncture clinic. This rural hospital is known for it's unique approach to community-based medicine. It offers complementary medicines like traditional Thai herbal medicine, Thai massage as well as acupuncture for adjunctive treatment for people living with HIV and AIDS.

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Photo (left): Here is Dr. Nopporn the 'retired' hospital administrator of Mae On Hospital. He invited us all for lunch at his beautiful home in the country side. And yes, he is cooking outside.

After visiting the Mae On Project we headed to India and the Darjeeling Project. This project is located in a small, rural town in the northeast of India right near the borders of Nepal, Tibet, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

We have been very grateful to have another incredible nurse overseeing the acupuncture clinic in Kalimpong. Her name is Pasangkit. She is a retired colonel from the military and volunteers on many projects to help her community including the acupuncture clinic. We are very lucky to have such a competent, super smart woman with a warm and compassionate heart. Not only does Pasangkit oversee the clinic and the treatments but she also provides counselling to the young nurses trained in the acupuncture. All the young nurses live at home until they are married. Most come from villages and poor families where their household duties at home can be quite



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stressful. Pasangkit provides these young woman with an empathic ear and grounded advice. All the nurses we trained the previously year were still at the hospital and attended the training which made us very happy. Quite often one or more of the nurses will be called home to take care of a parent or a grand parent.



Photo (left): Here we are at Adarsha Hospital. Front row from left to right: Pasangkit, Dr. Gyalmit and me. Back row from left to right: Chanda, Nima and Binita. Everyone here is trained in acupuncture including Dr. Gyalmit.



Photo (above): Here is the acupuncture in full swing. Pasangkit far left is overseeing the nurses' treatments. Chanda is on the right doing moxibustion over the acupuncture needles. You can see its cold inside with all the blankets over the patients to keep them warm.



Photo (above): Pasangkit and myself are models for the Chinese massage training. Binita is doing massage on me and Nima is doing massage on Pasangkit. The nurses caught on quickly and their massage skills were very good, so much so that the doctors would pay them for a massage after surgery.

Photo (right): Here I am with Binita teaching her about acupuncture point choices while a patient is telling me where his pain is.



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Photo (above left): Here I am discussing the anatomical location of an acupuncture point to the nurses.



Photo (above right): Here I am teaching a patient and the nurses a stretch to help with his pain.



Photo (left): Here is Alain from the Kalimpong Animal Shelter. Alain volunteers there for several months each year. When Alain had a back injury, I referred him to the acupuncture clinic. Alain had great results and came several times.

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Photos (above left): This was our last day of acupuncture training. Those nurses who completed part two of the training received certificates. The other nurses had completed part two in the previous year.

Photo (above right): Isn't this a great photo? From left to right: Jyoti, Pasangkit, Anita and Nima. Simply beautiful.

An exciting event happened on this trip. We were able to save a street dog that we named 'Lucky' (now named 'Lucy') from a certain death on the dangerous streets of Kalimpong and bring her back to Canada.

We met Lucy in October 2016. She was literally the thinnest dog we had ever seen in India and so you know what I'm talking about. A walking skeleton. We started to feed her. Lucy was very reluctant at first but then started eating. We were thrilled.

Before we left last October we took her to the local Animal Shelter where they gave her an IV with medicines and flea treatments. We hadn't noticed that Lucy was covered from head to toe in fleas. The worse case we had ever seen. We told Lucy if she survived the winter in Kalimpong we would bring her back to Canada and find a loving home for her.

Well Lucy survived to everyone's amazement. We all thought she would die including the vet, Dr. Pandey. They took special care of Lucy at the animal shelter and a volunteer, Yogita, was instrumental in communicating with us as well as Lucy's recovery. Thank you Yogita, Dr. Pandey and all the staff at the animal shelter!

It took 3 weeks to train Lucy to go in her travel crate, learn how to walk with a leash, learn how to go into a house (she was deathly afraid to go into a house because of abuse from the streets), learn how to get near a car and go inside, and to get used to being touched and massaged. Lucy did really well and then we sent her ahead of us on KLM airlines to Canada with a pet comfort stop in Amsterdam.

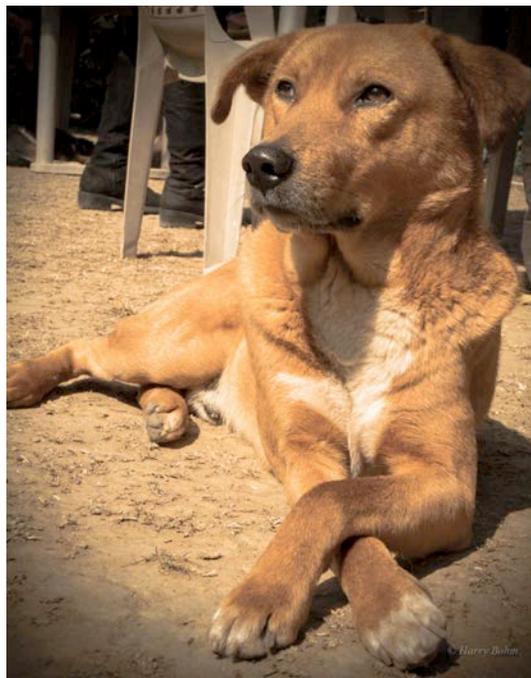
We were extremely grateful that our dear friends Ian and Glen said they would provide a safe, loving and warm home for little Lucy. You see we told Lucy she would never be cold again. There is no heat in the buildings or homes during winter which makes it bitterly cold being at the foot of the Himalayan mountains. So this is a fairy tale with a very good ending. Lucy has a forever home with her loving sister Kloe and her two dads. We couldn't have asked for a more perfect family for Lucy!

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Photo (left): Here is Lucy on the left with her new sister Kloe. They got along incredibly well right from the start. If you look closely you can see their front legs intertwined. Just adorable!

Unfortunately we were not able to return to the Darjeeling project this fall because of a general political strike which paralyzed the region. All roads were shut down and all foreigners were forced out of this area. All schools were closed and those students who boarded were sent home. All shops and government offices were closed. All ATMs were closed. There were curfews and violence that ended in several deaths. We were saddened to hear of the passing of our favourite cat 'Naughty' and equally loved dog 'Duray' during the strike. Both had lived at Holumba Haven, a home stay where we have resided at for seven years during the trainings.



Photos: Naughty above and Duray to the left. May you both rest in peace and find much love, comfort and lots of treats in Rainbow Bridge. Love you two!!

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The strike lasted just over 3 months making it extremely difficult to get food, feed the children and receive any sort of health care. It was incredibly stressful on this rural community. Thankfully the strike lifted and things are gradually getting back to normal.

We are looking forward to returning to the Darjeeling project and Mae On Project in February 2018.

And finally a BIG thank you to Harry. He always wants to be behind the scenes and the camera. However, we felt it was time to recognize Harry for his incredible photography in documenting the journey of the projects, for providing the photos for all of our newsletters and for his invaluable support and dedication to helping others including the furry ones.

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

Dr. Laura Louie, ND, MSc
Founder and Project Coordinator
LAURA LOUIE HOPE PROJECTS
#337-1917 West Fourth Avenue
Vancouver, BC, CANADA V6J 1M7
drlauralouie@yahoo.ca



Photo (above): Pasangkit gave me a traditional Indian top which I am wearing over my clothes. The nurses said I needed to take off my glasses for the photo. Pasangkit is to the far right. The nurses look completely different in their street clothes with their hair down. All so beautiful inside and out.