

Laura Louie Hope Projects



December 1, 2010

Dear Friends & Supporters,

We have just returned from the Mae On Project in Thailand and the Darjeeling project in India. It was filled with challenges, excitement and success!

The Mae On Project continues to help people living with HIV and AIDS in rural northern Thailand. We met one client (Mr. S) who has been coming regularly to the acupuncture clinic at Mae On hospital for 2 years. We first met him in 2008 when he came for help. He is HIV positive but his main concern was the paralysis of his legs. Mr S had been a paraplegic for 3 or 4 years and confined to a wheelchair. We weren't sure how much acupuncture would help since his injury was a few years ago but we decided to do our best. Besides acupuncture we also taught him exercises to decrease the tightness in his legs and encouraged a healthy diet.



After 2 years of regular acupuncture treatments, Mr S is able to walk on his own with a walker for short distances. He also has some sensation coming back into his legs, the muscle spasms have decreased and he is able to move his legs a little. With this improvement his quality of life has been greatly enhanced. Mr S feels much better about himself and now has started learning to do batik. He hasn't worked in years. The batiks he does are amazing. We'll be bringing some back to Canada on our next trip to sell for him. Mr S is thrilled to be making money again and his self-esteem has soared.

Photo (left): Here is Mr. S with a big smile on his face wearing one of his beautiful batiks. Great job Mr. S!! We are so proud of you!!

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Photos (above): Here is Maki modeling one of the beautiful batiks made by Mr. S. They are spectacular, aren't they? Maki works with a Japanese NGO and is the person who has greatly helped Mr. S by providing transportation to the acupuncture clinic at Mae On Hospital, medical care, training in batik and general support.



Photos (above left): Here is Mr. S using his walker to get to the car from the acupuncture clinic at Mae On Hospital.

Our big news is that we will be sponsoring the building of an annex for people living with HIV and AIDS at Mae On Hospital, all possible by your very generous donations. This annex will house the new acupuncture clinic. Currently the acupuncture clinic shares a space with the physiotherapy department where it is located up a large step, which is difficult for those in wheelchairs or for those who use walkers. So the move into the new space will be very much needed.

The new annex will also have a multifunction room where they will hold seminars and courses for people living with HIV as well as meetings and the HIV medical clinic. There also will be offices and a kitchen. Preparing food for seminars and courses is very important in the Thai culture.

Because of this new annex, space will be opened up in the old office area for a patient HIV education area. Here we hope to have a library and computers with internet access.

We expect the annex to be completed in the next 6 months.

The Darjeeling project has been challenging. The acupuncture clinics we helped set up with the Indian Red Cross are hardly being used. We were disappointed. This trip we did a surprise visit to 4 clinic sites. One site had closed down because the two acupuncture trainees were no longer there. One trainee had relapsed and the other had left town because of political unrest in the area.

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We were told from the Indian Red Cross managers that the staff had not been paid for 4 months and because of this the staff were not motivated to work. We are not sure how to rectify these challenges. Before we started doing the trainings with the Indian Red Cross they had assured us that funding for the acupuncture clinic would not be a problem.

On a happier note, three graduates from the Indian Red Cross outpatient addiction program that had regular acupuncture treatments have become clean and are now starting their own live-in Rehabilitation Center in Kurseong. They were interested in adding acupuncture treatments to their program and so Bhaskar and Ranjan, who were trained by the Laura Louie Hope Projects will start volunteering doing acupuncture on a daily basis for this rehabilitation center. We will check back on our next trip to see what benefits their clients received when using acupuncture regularly in conjunction with counseling, narcotics anonymous and a supportive environment free of drugs.

We ran a free acupuncture clinic in Kalimpong at the Adarsha Nursing Home (nursing homes are hospitals in India). The main purpose was to see if the nurses would be interested in learning acupuncture and if the public had any interest in trying this therapy. The acupuncture clinic was a big hit and we're happy to announce that we'll be starting an acupuncture training program for nurses at Adarsha Nursing Home in February 2011. We expect the training will be given over the next two years.



Photos: Here we are at the Adarsha nursing home running the free acupuncture clinic.

Photo (above left): I'm interviewing a patient. This photo gives you an idea of the clinic set-up.

Photos (above right): I'm demonstrating and explaining how to locate and insert an acupuncture needle with the nurses observing.

Photo (right): The nurses were so keen to help with everything. Here one of the nurses is assisting with doing moxibustion on a patient.

From our experience, most of the patients coming in for acupuncture have a chief complaint of pain. In this semi-rural community they have no resources other than medications to help with pain. There is no physiotherapy, occupational therapy or massage so starting an acupuncture clinic will certainly help many in this area.

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The acupuncture clinic at the Adarsha Nursing Home will provide free acupuncture treatments for people living with HIV and have a sliding scale for those non-HIV patients – from the poor to middle class citizens of the area. In this way, we hope the acupuncture clinic will be able to sustain itself.

Harry connected with a local NGO regarding the smokeless stove/kitchen program the Laura Louie Hope Projects is involved in. Because of political unrest in the district, the local NGO was unable to attend the informal training sessions on creating a smokeless kitchen environment. Hence the stove program was delayed until our next visit in February.

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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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.