

Mayway Challenge Grant to Acupuncturists Without Borders

Together we raised over \$10,000 for our vets!

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Beginnings

Acupuncturists Without Borders (AWB) came about in 2005 as a result of a grassroots effort following Hurricane Katrina. Practitioners from all over the country responded to AWB Founder Diana Fried's call to come to greater New Orleans and use acupuncture to help the people there heal. AWB set up clinics on street corners, in firehouses, churches, and housing projects to give free community-style acupuncture treatments to people from all walks of life, not only to those who had lost their homes, loved ones and livelihoods but also to FEMA workers, first responders and relief workers.

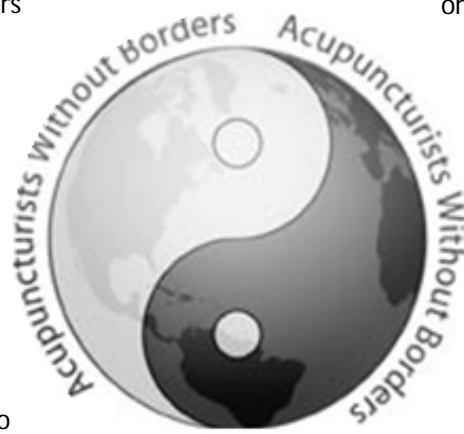
From the beginning, Mayway has been one of the biggest supporters of Acupuncturists Without Borders. A sizeable donation from Mayway helped to launch our work in New Orleans. Later, when we approached Mayway with our plan to start treatment programs for military veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, they were eager to hear more.

Our Veterans Project inspired them to offer us a challenge grant: they would match donations made to us on their website, up to a total of \$5000 - thereby offering AWB the chance to raise \$10,000 to support the Vets project. With the support of many generous donors we were successful in meeting the challenge.

All of us at AWB want first and foremost to thank everyone at Mayway, as well as all those who donated online, for their continued support of our mission and goals. The vote of confidence expressed by such giving inspires us in our work daily.

What we learned in New Orleans and how it will help veterans

When we worked in New Orleans, our volunteers lived and worked in chaotic and often challenging conditions. They responded with creativity and flexibility to the ever-changing environment. It was an amazing, collaborative effort under very difficult circumstances. One benefit of our work there was the development of a very effective model for treating in the demanding conditions brought on by disaster.



In order to prepare our volunteers and provide them with the needed skills for the future, AWB designed a training module to introduce some basic principles of grassroots service work. This training includes not only specific treatment protocols but also practical tips on community organizing, group dynamics, and resource development, to name a few. The training aims to create a strong core network of acupuncturists capable of working anywhere with large groups of people in times of disaster and trauma.

Our biggest lesson in New Orleans was that it isn't just about what needles or points you choose. It's about how you interact with people in distress; it's about being able to work in challenging environments and create order and healing in the midst chaos.

These are the vital skills, essential to this work, not taught in most acupuncture schools. It is training in just these skills that AWB is now able to offer its volunteers.

One of AWB's goals is to take volunteers to the next practical level and coach them on how to implement programs in their hometowns.

The Veterans Project of AWB

Our Veteran's Project is designed to encourage the startup of local volunteer acupuncture clinics in order to provide free community-style acupuncture to veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and their families. In 2005, AWB demonstrated that the community acupuncture protocol used in New Orleans is effective in treating the stress brought on by trauma. This new nationwide initiative, focuses on the treatment of stress-related symptoms such as anxiety, sleep problems, irritability, hyper-vigilance, flashbacks and mental foginess, all of which can be indications of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder). Community-style acupuncture can provide a simple, non-pharmaceutical, non-verbal healing modality in a safe environment and, in this case, among a community of veterans and their peers.

Goals of the Veterans Project

Our fundamental goal is to help alleviate some of the PTSD experienced by combat veterans, both in degree and severity, over time. In this way, we hope to bring healing and peace into the lives of our patients, their families and their communities. We also hope our volunteers will see the Veterans Project as an opportunity to hone their skills for the future, while facilitating the healing of our veterans and their families who have had to endure the horrific reality of war.



AWB has developed a grassroots model for initiating the startup of autonomously run Veterans Clinics around the country, for which AWB will serve as the coordinating organization. Local groups will be part of a national network of similar clinics established with the help of, and operating under the general guidelines of AWB.

Establishing local Veterans Clinic sites will give area groups experience working together and opportunities to create connections among those interested and involved in service work. A secondary aim for these groups is to have strong ties within their own communities and be ready to respond quickly should other needs arise in their regions.

The Albuquerque Veterans Clinic

Our pilot clinic, the Albuquerque Veterans Clinic, has been up and running for over a year now. Its challenges and successes have informed our recommendations and plans for other clinics. While getting a group of veterans to attend regularly was initially difficult, they turned the corner when veterans in a support group at the VA stood up and talked about their positive experiences at the clinic.

Here's a sample of the feedback we've been getting from the veterans:

*"Very relaxing and calming which promotes less anxiety."
"I just want to thank you very much for offering this service." "I'm very thankful to you.. you've helped me in the abovesystems." (On the evaluations form, the respondent circled mental clarity, improved energy, sleeping problems, bad dreams, headaches, anxiety, depression, anger, helps me be calmer, helps me cope with day-to-day life better.)
"Very relaxing--and the feeling of being among fellow veterans was also very reassuring."*

The Veterans Project today

The Albuquerque Veterans Clinic has given hundreds of treatments to veterans in the past year. It has also become totally self-sustaining and solvent. Donations have exceeded

expenses and the clinic regularly sends a donation to AWB to help support the creation of other clinics. Veterans Clinics also opened this year in Baltimore, Portland and Chicago. AWB has continued work on the infrastructure of the project.

We completed the Field Manual for the Veterans Project, which includes information on logistics, clinical protocols, team building, team leadership and team membership, outreach, fundraising, managing supplies, schedules, press release templates, and financial management. The manual also includes samples of all necessary clinic forms.

We have also set up the Veterans Project Advisory Board, composed of military veterans, acupuncturists and others with backgrounds in related fields.

AWB holds regular informational conference calls with acupuncturists who are starting up local Veterans Clinics. We plan to enhance this networking by creating an interactive website where clinics can share information and assist each other in national publicity efforts.

In the next few months, new clinics will be opening in Framingham MA, New York City, Washington D.C. and elsewhere. AWB's nationwide database of acupuncturists interested in starting clinics contains over 700 names. Other groups are forming in California, South Dakota, Georgia and Maine and we expect the project to gain momentum in the years to come.

The funding from Mayway and its generous donors will go directly to support AWB's further development of the Veterans Project and the groups creating new Veterans Clinics. We will continue to provide: monthly updates to the Field manual, regular conference calls to connect groups around the country, and AWB staff support for volunteers. In addition, AWB will continue to keep its volunteers informed about veterans issues and will increasingly work on providing national media coverage for the program.

All of these items take time, commitment and funding, and AWB is thrilled to have the support of Mayway and its patrons as partners in this endeavor.

Mary Chaney is a licensed acupuncturist in private practice in Portland, Maine. She received her Masters of Acupuncture degree at the Traditional Acupuncture Institute (now Tai Sophia) in Columbia, MD in 1989. Mary is a past president of the Maine Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (MAAOM). In 2004, as head of MAAOM, she was instrumental in the successful effort to pass legislation expanding the scope of practice of all Maine acupuncturists. Past volunteer work includes working as a facilitator at the Center for Grieving Children in Portland, Maine. She can be contacted at www.acuwithoutborders.org.