

## HEALING COMMUNITY TRAUMA: Empowering Acupuncturists to Transform Their Communities

By **Melanie Rubin, AWB Co-Director, Carla Cassler, AWB Co-Director, and Diana Fried, AWB Founder and Board President**



Acupuncturists Without Borders (AWB) was created in 2005 to help those in Louisiana suffering from stress and trauma in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.



AWB Volunteer Daphne Jochnick treating a First Responder in New Orleans

Mayway has been a critical AWB supporter and partner since the very beginning. In fact, Mayway was AWB's first donor, helping to jumpstart the Hurricane Katrina relief effort. Mayway also donated technical support from the corporation's IT specialist, who designed AWB's logo and created the AWB website.

After Katrina, more than 80 acupuncturists were trained by AWB to work in the field in New Orleans, and these acupuncturists treated close to 8,000 people in Louisiana. This early emergency training provided the prototype for AWB's current Healing Community Trauma course, which has now trained over 2500 acupuncturists in the United States.

The acupuncturists trained by AWB have helped establish over 30 community service clinics that provide free treatments to veterans, military personnel, refugees, economically challenged people and other trauma-impacted communities across the U.S.



Val Talento treating veterans at the Albuquerque Veterans Acupuncture Clinic

In the words of AWB founder Diana Fried:

*"AWB's vision is to help build stable, peaceful, global communities. Knowing that unresolved trauma can have repercussions for decades, we train acupuncturists to offer community style acupuncture to interrupt this cycle...Over the past ten years, AWB has learned that the best way to accomplish this mission is by training acupuncturists to provide trauma relief in their own communities."*

These practitioners have also gone on to offer trauma recovery service after natural disasters such as wildfires in Colorado, California and Texas; floods in Iowa and Colorado; tornadoes in Missouri, Minnesota and Oklahoma; and Super Storm Sandy. Many trauma recovery efforts have also been launched after human-created disasters like the Boston Marathon Bombing and the Aurora, CO and Newtown, CT shootings.

In 2014 alone AWB supported disaster relief efforts in: Oso, WA; Okanogan County, WA; Oak Creek, CA; Angus, Ontario, Canada; Calgary, Canada; and Puna, Hawaii.



2014 Trauma Recovery Clinic in Puna, Hawaii

The 2014 Hawaii relief effort involved acupuncturists from the islands of Oahu and Hawai'i, also known as the "Big Island." In late October/early November of 2014, hundreds of local Puna residents on the Big Island were evacuated, placed on evacuation alert, or adversely affected by smoke as a result of lava flow from the Kilauea volcano. Several schools in Puna were also closed for weeks, creating a tense, stressful atmosphere for students, teachers and parents. The "slow" nature of this unpredictable natural process created profound uncertainty, worry, and loss for many, especially coming as it did on the heels of Tropical Storm Iselle, which caused a great deal of damage.

*"Fear, tension, and grief have prevailed for many weeks... life in Puna is in a highly transformational stage. Most of us need help with these changes! Mahalo for even considering coming to our community, we NEED you, and we need healing!"*

~ Mary L., Resident of Pahoa

Local acupuncturists asked AWB for help in training them how to set up and run a trauma recovery effort. In this effort like so many others, Mayway played a central role, jumping in at a moment's notice to provide funding that made the relief work possible – something the company has done for other national disaster relief efforts as well! With AWB's support, acupuncturists from both Oahu and the Big Island ran a series of free trauma treatment clinics for hundreds of Puna residents, offering them relief from the stress and distress of the evacuation threat.

Please see AWB's documentary about the Hawaii Relief Effort, located on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dqhzVgVbEQ>

AWB also sponsors international projects, providing trauma reduction services and training in collaboration with local organizations in Haiti, Nepal, Mongolia, Israel-Palestine, and Mexico. The Haiti program began after the devastating earthquake in January of 2010 which killed more than



Louissant Alcide, AWB Haiti Clinic Coordinator, training health workers in Haiti. Photo: Melanie Rubin

230,000 people, severely injured another 300,000, and displaced 1.5 million people, approximately 15% of the country's population. Again, Mayway provided the essential seed money for the startup of this effort. AWB was able to send eight teams to Haiti in 2010 to provide free trauma recovery treatments, and then trained 120 local doctors, nurses, and community health care workers to offer these treatments on an ongoing basis. AWB-trained volunteers and health care workers continue to deliver free, weekly treatments in the capital city of Port-au-Prince, as well as Leogane, the epicenter of the earthquake, under the direction of AWB Haiti Clinic Coordinator, Louissant Alcide. Local medical personnel have requested additional training – so plans are in process for a return trip to Haiti in 2015.

In addition to international training projects, AWB sponsors World Healing Exchange Trips (WHE) that combine clinical training, service to international communities, cultural tourism, and education about traditional healing practices. In 2015, AWB will be taking acupuncturists from the U.S. to Oaxaca, Mexico and Nepal.



AWB trained health worker providing treatments in Haiti  
Photo: Melanie Rubin



Healing Community Trauma training in San Francisco, 2013. Photo: Carla Cassler

Acupuncturists Without Borders would like to extend deep thanks to Mayway for the company's ongoing partnership and support throughout the ten years of AWB's life – and now for hosting AWB's *Healing Community Trauma* training on March 21-22, 2015.

This interactive, 2-day, 15 CEU class includes:

- review of the NADA 5 point ear needle protocol
- the HeartMath system
- how to create a community service clinic
- the neurobiology of trauma
- building a community-based treatment program after natural or human disasters
- how to work together on treatment teams
- how to collaborate with local disaster response organizations

For more information go to:

<http://www.acuwithoutborders.org/news.php?n=ca15training>

or email:

[programs@acuwithoutborders.org](mailto:programs@acuwithoutborders.org)

*Bio:*

*Melanie Rubin, M.Ed., NADA Acudetox Specialist is Co-Director of Acupuncturists Without Borders. She has been a trainer, business coach, marketing consultant, and author working with acupuncturists and other health practitioners for 25 years. Melanie manages AWB's Haiti, National Disaster Relief, and National training programs, and is based out of the organization's main office in Albuquerque, New Mexico.*

*Carla Cassler, DAOM, LAc. is Co-Director of Acupuncturists Without Borders and manages the organization's Community Service Clinic, Israel, and Development programs. She has practiced acupuncture and Chinese medicine for 30 years, specializing in women's health, pediatric, orthopedic and trauma treatment. Carla is an instructor and clinic supervisor at ACTCM in San Francisco, where she also coordinates a free clinic for veterans. Her private practice is located in Kensington, California.*

*Diana Fried, M.Ac., M.A., NADA Acudetox Specialist is the President of the Board and Founder of Acupuncturists Without Borders. She has worked in and supervised disaster relief efforts in multiple locations throughout the U.S. including California, Louisiana, and Hawaii, as well as internationally in countries such as Haiti, Nepal, Mongolia, Ecuador, and Mexico. Diana created and now coordinates AWB's World Healing Exchange Program. She is based in Sandia Park, New Mexico.*