



November, 2014

**THE ICAOM/AWB –PUNA, HAWAII ACUPUNCTURE RELIEF PROJECT:
AN EDUCATIONAL-COMMUNITY SERVICE COLLABORTION**



Acupuncturists Without Borders (AWB) is collaborating with the Institute of Clinical Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ICAOM) to bring stress-reduction acupuncture to people impacted by the Kilauea volcano lava flow and Tropical Storm Iselle in Puna, HI.



Mariya Gold, L.Ac., ICAOM Graduate, Providing Stress Reduction Treatments in Pahoia, HI

Hundreds of people in Puna have been evacuated, are on evacuation alert, or have been adversely affected by smoke. Several schools in the community have been closed for at least two weeks, creating a tense, stressful atmosphere for students, teachers and parents. The "slow" nature of the lava flow has meant profound uncertainty and worry for many in Pahoā, a community in the Puna district closest to the lava flow and already significantly challenged by poverty.

On November 1-2, AWB offered a *Healing Community Trauma* training at ICAOM in Honolulu. This training course prepares acupuncturists to provide community-style acupuncture in the field to communities impacted by natural and human-created disasters. Dr. Wai Low and the ICAOM Board provided eight scholarships to students to attend the training, and hosted the course. By the second day of the training, many participants were ready to develop a relief response to support Puna residents. ICAOM sponsored AWB to do an additional training in Pahoā on November 8th. Seventeen acupuncturists and ICAOM students on the big island were trained and they provided over 75 treatments to residents in three community clinics on Saturday and Sunday. The ICAOM/AWB- Puna, HI Acupuncture Relief Project was launched! Treatments will be offered on November 15th, and the intention going forward is to provide weekly clinics for the community.

One of the most unique aspects of the ICAOM-AWB collaboration is how AOM students are being integrated into the ongoing relief project. Since ICAOM also has a campus on the big island, students will be able to provide treatments in the Puna community service clinics under a supervising L.Ac. and receive clinic externship credit.

This collaborative model serves several educational goals:

- On-site mentoring of students by seasoned clinicians
- An opportunity for students to provide significant community service while learning
- Experience working on a clinical team in the field
- Gaining an understanding of the unique needs of trauma-impacted patients

Many AOM students have written to AWB about how this work has inspired them to go to AOM school and enter our profession:

"As a student, it's easy to get swept away by studying and obsessing about grades, forgetting one's true purpose. When I saw what AWB was doing in the world at the Healing Community Trauma training, I was blown away. THIS is why I am studying acupuncture. The AWB training not only reminded me of why I came to acupuncture school, but it also showed me how I could be of great service to the local and global community using the skills I have right now." Frankye Riley, student at NESAs

The leadership of Dr. Wai Low and the ICAOM Board has made this project happen. It is a model for successful action, service and education that benefits the community, AOM schools, and service organizations like AWB. We invite you to view the AWB-Puna, Hawaii Acupuncture Relief Project Facebook page to learn more: <https://www.facebook.com/acuforPuna>

Submitted with Gratitude and Respect,

Carla Cassler, DAOM, LAc (Graduate of ACTCM),
Co-Director, Acupuncturists Without Borders