



ACUPUNCTURE & ACUPRESSURE

Oriental Medicine on the World Stage

EMPEROR'S COLLEGE SERVES AS A HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROVIDER FOR THE SPECIAL OLYMPIC WORLD GAMES IN LOS ANGELES AND SHARES ORIENTAL MEDICINE WITH SOME OF THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY ATHLETES IN THE WORLD.

Kathryn Feather

"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt." This simple, yet powerful statement was lived out time and time again by so many of the athletes from around the world during the Special Olympics World Games in Los Angeles. And Emperor's College was there to provide health services to coaches and athletes throughout the games. By all accounts, it was a life changing experience for everyone involved.

"We were supposed to be helping them, and we did, but they gave back so much more," said Arianna Accardi, Emperor's Student Council President. "It was amazing how quickly you could foster relationships. My heart was opened in a way that doesn't always happen so quickly. It was a powerful experience and one I will never forget."



Emperor's provided acupressure, Chinese medical massage and other noninvasive measures to the more than 6,500 athletes and 2,000 coaches from 165 countries. Some of the issues treated included minor aches and pains, travel fatigue, jet lag, anxiety, insomnia, over stimulation and digestive issues. Emperor's goal was to quickly resolve any wellness complaints so the athletes and coaches could perform their best during the games and maximize their experience. Emperor's College also coordinated tai chi and yoga classes that were held in the athletes village, a first for the games.



"The Oriental Medicine Wellness area at the Games was for all intents and purposes a pilot program. The program was such a success that we have been invited to present the program to the Senior Director, Global Community Health Programs at Special Olympics International, the parent organization of the Special Olympic World Games, for further consideration with the goal of having OM wellness services become a more permanent part of the healthy athletes program beginning with the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Austria in 2017," said Chris Johnston, Public Affairs Director for Emperor's College.

OM Ambassadors



"While the athletes represented their countries, we were ambassadors for Oriental Medicine," said Starrie Lowe, LAc, DIPL. Ac. DIPL CH and an Emperor's alum. Lowe performed Tui Na acupressure for the athletes and coaches with each session lasting from ten to 15 minutes. "It was immensely gratifying that athletes of all ages accepted our treatment even without any previous experience. When the athletes and coaches returned for further sessions, they also happened to bring along more team members to enjoy the benefits of the OM Wellness program. Many inquired about continuing care when they returned home."



"The athletes loved this experience and it has never been done at a Special Olympics World Games before," said Janet Rodriguez, Director, Healthy Athletes for the Special Olympics World Games. "We have received phenomenal feedback from all involved, not only our athletes but the coaches, staff and volunteers as well. It was a pleasure working with Chris Johnston and the Emperor's staff and volunteers. Kudos to their strong work and commitment to the Special Olympics and the cause."

"It was a great opportunity to learn from the other practitioners who were volunteering," said Accardi. "Other medical professionals were blown away by how many people we were seeing and the range of things we were helping the athletes with."



"One of the great things to come from these games and the success of the Oriental Medicine services we organized is that it really opened the door for other licensed acupuncturists and schools like Emperor's College to get involved with regional Special Olympics events. We have been contacted by more than a dozen such organizations in the United States and from several other countries to share our thoughts on how they can integrate Tui Na and acupressure into their events," said Johnston.

A Personal Connection



Emperor's Alumni Starrie Lowe shares the story of her connection with one athlete in particular. "As a spectator, I had the privilege of meeting some of the most fascinating world class athletes. One memorable athlete was Jarmo Patana of Finland, a man with an indomitable spirit. He is now a true champion with four gold medals to share with his family and friends in Kokkola. I instantly admired his compassion and kindness radiating from basic goodness like the sun. His expertise was in the singles kayaking events. From his delegates, I learned Jarmo's immeasurable commitment, passion, and dedication to his sport already won him two gold medals in the World Games in Athens in 2011.



"To see him clench his fourth gold in the 200m race at Marine Stadium was absolutely surreal. The instant he paddled across the finish line, I was immediately overcome with emotion and tears. I felt euphoric and blissful. I clearly remember hearing the supportive roar from the crowd and fans. Before me was a brilliant spirit with whom I became enamored.

"Following the jubilant medals ceremony, in another golden moment, Jarmo contentedly sprinted towards me and we clung tightly to each other. He possessed a natural sense of harmony with his surroundings. He simply took my breath away. It felt as if we were the last two people on earth. It was an enduring hug that could be heard around the world. A hug that will reside in my heart

eternally for the reason that he was perfectly effortless in letting his genuine warmth and pure love flow."



A Powerful Experience

Gretchen Badami, DAOM, LAc, an Associate Dean at Emperor's College describes the scene at the OM Wellness tent and the impact these athletes made on the volunteers from Emperor's College. "Withing a matter of days, the Emperor's OM Wellness tent quickly became the place all the coaches and athletes wanted to be. Every athlete and team that entered the tent was cheered on and the name of their country was shouted out en masse by volunteers. The excitement was contagious and everyone would go around the tent giving high-fives and cheering on the respective participants. The event was an opportunity for faculty, administration, alumni and students of all levels to come together to offer skillful and healing Tui Na to individuals who never experienced this form of medicine. Even the founder of Emperor's College, Dr. Bong Dal Kim, dedicated his entire week to be at the Wellness tent with the athletes and at the busiest times, he could be seen standing side-by-side with his students, pushing, rolling, pressing and kneading."



"After competing, sometimes immediately or the next day, the athletes returned bounding into the wellness tent, bursting with pride that they wanted to share with the volunteers. Some displayed bronze, silver or even gold medals; others competed without achieving a medal but shared their beaming smiles and elation of having participated and having had a great time," said Badami. "This event impacted not only the athletes and coaches who received treatments, but every single practitioner and student who volunteered at the World Games. Emperor's College had the opportunity to bring Oriental Medicine to the world, to our global village, one athlete at a time. This is the true nature of our medicine; to heal through connection, skill, compassion and an open heart."

After a week of competition, some did win. Others lost. All were brave in the attempt.

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