

## Gather & Grow

Marilyn Allen, Editor at Large

I recently attended a faculty seminar held by one of the acupuncture schools. There was a facilitator who led us through some very interesting experiences. The attendees were a diverse group with varying opinions. Our first exercise was to reflect and list all of the projects, events and materials that had been completed, which got me thinking — there is strength in numbers. So, I ask, "Are you a member of an association? If so, have you worked with others in your association?" Next take a minute to reflect on your local acupuncturists, "Do you know them, how about your state legislators?"

In last month's column I suggested you crow (communicate) to those around you — co-workers and neighbors about the acupuncture profession. So, let's take it a step further ... get involved, join an association, state or national. This will benefit you and the profession as a whole because when you gather ... you grow.

The proof of that is in the recent accomplishments of Acupuncturists Without Borders (AWB), who are involved both nationally and internationally. Below are just a few of their contributions:

- Forty-one community clinics (within the U.S.) run by AWB-trained acupuncturists treat 600-800 veterans (and their families), and refugees per week.
- U.S. AWB-trained teams of acupuncturists go regularly to Greece to work in two refugee camps and treat 80-100 people each week. AWB is also training Greek doctors to work with the teams.
- Haitian health providers, trained by AWB, treat 500 people a month in hurricane-devastated areas. Nepali health providers and acupuncturists, trained by AWB, treat girls who have been trafficked and children who have been orphaned.

AWB conducts regular trainings in the U.S. called *Healing Community Trauma* and is leading several [World Healing Exchange](#) trips this year, including one later this month to Israel and the West Bank.

This medicine is the fastest growing in the world today and you are part of its growth. Now is the time to build strong ties and unite this profession. We can help the population in the U.S. learn about and use this medicine. We can treat more patients. We can have more jobs for the profession. We can have a voice with state legislators and Congress. We can get HR 3849 passed by Congress. We can get laws passed that will help patients have better access to the medicine. We can help to make medicine more patient centered. We can complete the process for the inclusion of the International Classification of Traditional Medicine codes in the ICD-11 revision. It is time to strengthen our local and national presence. If you aren't part of a state organization think about joining one. The American Society of Acupuncturists [ASA](#) has a list under the state organizations tab.

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