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*Outreaching; that is our main notion.*

*Through adventuring outside of our comfort zone to reach out to the needed, we believe we could cultivate our passion and devotion in the practice of medicine. Let our flame not be diminished, but rather, spread to our neighboring friends. It is that simple.*

## Overview

### <Regional programmes>

#### Outreaching trips during summer

Last summer, we had two 2-week trips to the less developed parts of China. The first trip comprised activities such as shadowing orthopaedic surgeons, interviewing rural health doctors and villagers, conducting health education as well as health checks for the rural community. The second trip was focussed on generating AIDS awareness.

#### Regular short trips

We also organized many short educational and service-based trips, each lasted a few days, spread throughout the school term.

These trips provided invaluable opportunities to shadow Hong Kong medical organisations and doctors in mainland China. Participants had the chance to observe surgeries and assist doctors in overcoming language barriers, and helped with the recruitment of patients for free cataract surgery in rural villages.

### <Local Programmes>

#### Palliative care programme

The palliative care programme provided a unique opportunity to practice the art of communicating with patients, to understand their needs and to reflect upon how a healthcare workers' attitude can make a difference to a dying person—and all this in our pre-clinical years!

This programme, with visits held around once a month, is co-organized by Grantham Hospital and Medical Outreachers. It also includes a workshop and sharing sessions by residents working at the hospice, and most importantly, time for you to reach out!



# New Perspectives, Familiar Faces: MO Annual Trip 2011

With an aim to understand the rural healthcare conditions in China, 21 Medical Outreachers set off as two teams to Fuping, Shaanxi and Majiang, Guizhou respectively on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2011, marking the start of the 10-day Annual Trip 2011. After the 5-day expedition, the two teams reunited in Dongshan. With passion and care, we reinforced the bond between Medical Outreachers and the elderly and children there. This has been our third visit to the small village in Qinyuan, Guangzhou since summer 2010.

the doctors' subsidies, were funded by Amity Foundation. After interviewing village doctors and observing them carry out routine check-ups at patients' homes, the team has learned that



rather than being the “heroes” as perceived by many, doctors are but team players constituting an important part of primary care in China’s rural healthcare system.

In Dongshan, we organised health and general education, group games, a de-worming campaign and a weed-cutting session for children of migrant workers who are sponsored by our

collaborating NGO Green Action Charity Foundation.

Our volunteers also visited the families of these children and performed simple health checks for their elderly family members, and gathered precious data on their health and living conditions. We also kicked off a long-term “buddy system”—a matching-up between



In Fuping, Shaanxi, our participants observed the work of Operation Concern’s medical team and their social workers in the hospital. We had the opportunity to accompany Prof Leung Ping Chung and other orthopaedic surgeons during ward visits and surgeries. Through paying home visits and interviewing villagers receiving financial aid from Operation Concern, our participants learned about the rural medical insurance system in China. We had an eye-opening experience with Prof Leung when we visited an impoverished rural town, often encountering rare orthopaedics cases arisen due to poverty.

The Guizhou team visited village clinics in rural areas of Majiang County, where building maintenance, improvement of sanitation and provision of medical equipment, as well as



volunteers and children for follow-up on their growth and development, as well as their family and education conditions. After all this is one of our main objectives—to create a lasting positive impact.

# Taking the First Step to Address HIV/AIDS in Anhui: AIDS Awareness Service Learning Trip 2011



*Working with Chi Heng's staff and summer interns was indeed a fond memory!*

What is the present condition of the HIV/AIDS affected living in poverty-stricken areas of Central China? This is what 5 Medical Outreachers explored in Anhui for 2 weeks from 25<sup>th</sup> July to 7<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

The AIDS Awareness Service Learning Trip 2011, was made possible by Chi Heng Foundation, Hong Kong-based NGO supporting AIDS-affected children in China. Our team got a glimpse into how the impacts of HIV/AIDS endure till this day since it plagued rural Anhui back in the '90s— during the blood-selling frenzy.

Led by local summer interns who are Chi Heng-sponsored university students, our team visited AIDS-affected families in various villages, and learned about the challenges that AIDS patients and their families face. We were happy to learn that, through years of increased anti-HIV effort by the government, there has been an improvement in the perception of HIV/AIDS in local communities. We also stayed a few nights with our host families and had a taste of the truly authentic village lifestyle!

In Chi Heng's "Loving Home" for HIV-positive children, we conducted team-building activities, health education, geography classes and private tutoring sessions for the youngsters. By our frequent visits, we have become good friends with the children, and we hope to keep track of



*"10 hands on the blue area, with 10 feet on the yellow!" -- A team-building game with the "Loving Home" children.*

their personal development while being a positive influence to them.

The AIDS pandemic in Anhui is but one of the many facets of poverty in rural Central China. There is no better way to gain understanding of China's complex social issues than to reach out to them. We anticipate your involvement in our future AIDS Awareness programmes!



# An Eye-Opening Experience: Cataract Surgeries



From February to July, 2011, 16 Medical Outreachers participated in one of the cataract screening and surgery projects, organised by Green Action Charity Foundation in rural Guangdong. During the weekend trips, our volunteers facilitated the logistics, assisted the medical team in pre- and post-operational care, and observed cataract surgeries on the surgery bus. They found themselves watching and learning how a small-scale NGO manages to mobilise limited resources to benefit people in poverty. It was an eye-opening experience not only for the patients, who could regain sight, but for the volunteers also. Here, they share some of their afterthoughts.

*“At first, the patients appeared hesitant when I indicated to them to sit or to lie down. After some trials, I found out that it’s better to let them touch the seat and judge the distance than to forcefully put them into a certain position. I fully understood why when I closed my eyes and asked a volunteer to guide me for a seat. I realised how true the statement ‘you never know how to be a doctor until you become the patient’ is.”*

--Harmony To, HKU MBBS 2014

*“It is certainly exciting to watch a surgeon operate successfully on patients with the latest medical innovations. Yet, it is so much more astonishing to see these doctors skilfully dissect and replace the lens in patients suffering from cataracts with simple surgical tools.”*

--Gabriel Fung, HKU MBBS 2015



*“Many consulted doctors only when their eye conditions had reached terminal or critical conditions. While many elderly people were beaming with happiness when they were finally able to see for the first time in ten years, it was painful to learn that many would lose their vision very soon due to the lack of care, aggravated by habits of smoking and using barbeque fires for cooking.”*

--Adrian Yu, CUHK MBChB 2014

# Care for a Forgotten Disease: Visits to Leprosy Villages

Leprosy, or “Hansen’s Disease”, is a chronic disease that when left untreated, damages the skin and nerves and leads to disfigurement. In the 1950’s, Leprosy villages were set up in China to quarantine those affected. Terrified of social stigma and still in need of constant medical care, many villagers choose to stay isolated even though they have long since recovered from the disease. Medical Outreachers accompanied the Hong Kong Medical Missions Corp (HKMMC) on day-trips to several such leprosy villages in Guangdong. At the villages, we were received warmly and invited to share in their modest way of living. It was uplifting to see that, though hidden by the shadow of disease, talents continue to flourish—a spirited farmer showed us to his well-groomed vegetable garden, and a painter proudly displayed the striking works of art he had created by deformed hands.



# Operating for a Smile: Cleft Palate Surgeries

Operation Smile is an international NGO that deploys medical volunteers to rural areas to perform free cleft palate surgeries for underprivileged children. This year, with the help of Operation Smile’s dedicated staff (David Wong and Alice Yick), Medical Outreachers dispatched members on two of their missions in Yunnan Province, China. In April, our first group of 4 members set foot in Chuxiong for 4 days. The following month, we sent 2 more members on a mission to Dagan for a week—the full duration of a mission. Under the inspiring tutelage of Dr. Wang, the team’s chief surgeon, our members bore witness to the gift of a smile.



# What Orthopaedics Teaches Us About Primary Care

This May, two Year 3 students volunteered in a 4-day mission held by one of our long-standing collaborating NGO Operation Concern in Fuping, Shaanxi. Our participants accompanied a team of surgeons, nurses, allied physiotherapists and occupational therapists to tend to patients with physical disability. In the wards, the students visited patients suffering from diseases closely related to poverty, including cerebral palsy, a consequence of underdeveloped prenatal and perinatal care. Stepping out of their comfort zones, our doctors-in-training realised how the lack primary healthcare in an impoverished setting can lead to a myriad of health problems rarely seen in privileged societies like our own.

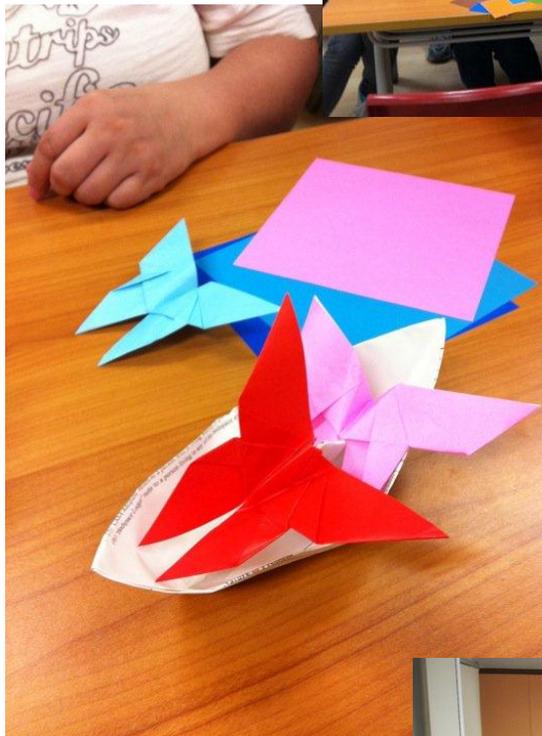
# Stewarding the Road to Recovery

In July this year, a number of Medical Outreachers experienced how it is like to work with ex-mentally ill persons. They constructed unique handicrafts together, some of which were given to the patients in our Palliative Care Programme as gifts! By this they brought about a way for the ex-mentally ill to show their empathy towards others in need.

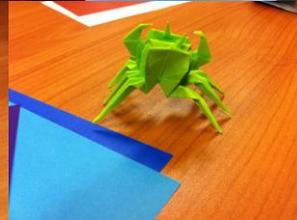


Stewards is a non-profit organization providing a variety of services targeted at youths and ex-mentally ill persons. This summer, Medical Outreachers had the opportunity to work with Stewards to serve the ex-mentally ill.

Contrary to popular belief that people who have suffered from mental illness are emotionally labile and difficult to communicate with, ex-mentally ill persons are in fact as competent as you and I. Like many of us, ex-mentally ill persons have gone through the downs in their life. With



persistence and with help from professionals, they have overcome the challenge, and are ready to work and live normally just like everybody. Just as an athlete recovering from a broken leg needs practice his way back to physical fitness, ex-mentally ill persons benefit from interacting with other people to help resume normal social and personal life.



Members of Stewards and Medical Outreachers also carried out outdoor photography sessions together. The photos, with specific themes, were displayed in the Stewards' Members Meeting as recognition of their achievement!

