

IMPROVING OUR WORLD



2016 Annual Report





FROM THE FOUNDER

Dear friends,

If you know me personally, you get that I am someone who chooses to be in-the-know. I choose to ask questions about the things I don't understand and continue to explore the things that I think I do. I will stand up for others in the face of injustice, no matter if they are a turtle trying to cross a busy highway or a person with disabilities fighting for a usable and decent bathroom. I have always been this way. My mom was certain I was going to grow up to become a lawyer because I was not afraid to speak my mind and I cared A LOT about others (I mean A LOT)! But the truth is that despite all these years of speaking out on behalf of others, deep down I am quite shy, I'm a real feeler, a "Highly Sensitive Person," and an empath. I could never be a lawyer.



I meet a lot of people who say to me, "I just don't know how you can do this work! It's so heartbreaking!" or "It's so exhausting! Don't you get tired?" And truth be told, it can be all of those things. I learned this the hard way by allowing myself to get burned out a few years back. The backlash to burnout is that instead of taking a break and integrating all the hard work you have been doing, you shut down and then beat yourself up for not being able to do it all. It's a typical cycle in the realm of activism and it scares a lot of people away from getting involved at all.

So how do we do both? How do we reconcile the parts of us that care so much about what is happening in our world, the parts that want to be available, to serve, and to act on behalf of a cause, with the parts of us that want to also enjoy our lives, to perhaps have a family, to own things like a house or a car, parts that want to watch silly movies sometimes, that want to delight in buttery croissants and drink fancy lattes, and take beach vacations? How do we live them both in our one earthly life?

Caring and serving are not about deprivation. And true service is never about stepping outside of ourselves in order to make room for something or someone else. And it's also never about shaming ourselves for having privilege or blaming ourselves (or others for that matter). Caring for and serving our world means we receive an invitation to actually step more fully into ourselves and really own our rightful place on Earth.

Service is not a hat we put on in the morning and take off at night. It's a state of mind. And we cultivate it by doing two things: 1) taking the utmost care of ourselves, given our circumstances and 2) living within our value system on a moment by moment basis. We hope that Inner Ocean's work will continue to inspire you to be of utmost service.

Endless blessings to you and yours this year and always.

Sincerely,

Mindi K. Counts

What is an Inner Ocean, You Ask?

The ancient Chinese recognized that even though we draw vital energy from many sources in our lives, we store it in a central channel held deeply within each of our bodies. This pool, often referred to as a sea or ocean in classical medical texts, is a reservoir of energy for the body, mind, and spirit to draw from throughout our entire lives. When our Inner Oceans are abundant and full of life, we also feel this way and find it easy to be open-hearted, to share our resources, to feel connected to others and this planet, and to cultivate resilience in difficult times.

The opposite is true when we have taxed this life-giving resource: We may feel exhausted, careful to extend ourselves, and sometimes downright hopeless. When our Inner Oceans are depleted, we may not even have the energy for the simplest of tasks or responsibilities, because it puts our nervous system into a state of survival mode. This is where violence, addiction, and the cycle of trauma begins: in the powerlessness that a lack of resources fuels.



Inner Ocean Empowerment Project is about finding what it takes to fill these reservoirs back up—thus empowering one person at a time, all around the globe, to have the resources they need to meet the challenges in their lives.



Navigating the Inner Ocean Empowerment Project

Generating Currents

- Women's Health & Education
- Global Disaster Relief
- Holistic Healthcare Accessibility

Training Wavemakers

- Educational & Leadership Programs

Flow Funding

- Microgrants for Global Wavemakers

Our Tools

- Alternative Healthcare Clinics
- Leadership Training
- Educational Health Classes
- Community Building Activities
- Bearing Witness Training
- Rites of Passage Ceremony

Our Causes

- Trauma/PTSD
- Addiction Recovery
- Sex-trafficking
- Poverty
- Oppression
- Social Inequality



Highlights in 2016

Since founding Inner Ocean in 2013, the question about transitioning to an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit was on the table. After lots of hard work, we are happy to announce our official nonprofit status! This model allows Inner Ocean to apply for and accept private grants as well as to simply continue to spread our wings in this world.

In January 2016 we met an incredible videographer named Andrew Syed who worked for Amnesty International and had worked all over the world. With his expertise, we were able to craft the first short video made about Inner Ocean's work. This was a beautiful project and we look forward to more opportunities to spread our message of global unity and service.

In October 2017 we are launching our first ever Sacred Service Trip to Nepal that will be open to a group of wonderful participants to join! We are so excited as we get to share more of our work with others who are interested in being of service, as well as learning from these incredible communities.

MISSION

To counter suffering caused by disease, poverty, and oppression using holistic health care and education.

VISION

A world where basic needs are met and equal value is placed on all sentient beings.

GOAL

Restoring health, building resilience, and empowering leadership in the individuals and communities we serve.

PROJECT REPORTS

Nepal

In April 2016, Mindi and Inner Ocean Board Member Jonathan Grassi journeyed back to Nepal for the ongoing earthquake relief work. Their team, along with Dr. Shyam Maharjan, a local Nepali acupuncture doctor and president of the Nepal Acupuncture Association, trekked around some of the most devastated areas of Nepal during a month-long service trip. No-cost health camps were set up throughout the Kathmandu Valley offering first aid, acupuncture treatments, herbal medicine prescriptions, and bodywork sessions. In cases of serious medical conditions, emergency referrals were arranged.



The team also taught classes to educate and support wellness among the Nepali people. They observed and treated many people with similar body mechanic concerns, prompting educational classes on proper stretching and posture. Incredible translators made the teaching aspect in each village possible. Mindi and Jonathan loved working with them! The most incredible part of this trip for them was having the time to simply be with the Nepali people who embody such resilience and generosity.

In addition, Inner Ocean acknowledges the support of 15 sherpas on staff, enabling the team to carry desperately needed water and supplies to each of the health camps! Beebal, Inner Ocean's main Nepali guide and consultant, organized much of this program so we could treat as many patients as possible. We treated conditions ranging from from dehydration to goiter to broken backs to dysentery.

We averaged about 150 patients each day during the health camps in the Sindhupalchok region. Part of the trip was spent in remote regions of Nepal. With the help of our translators, we worked with nearly 770 adult patients and countless children.

Future Nepal projects include the rebuilding of a community health clinic that was destroyed.

Stay tuned for updates!



Why does Inner Ocean care about Nepal anyway?

Fast Facts on the 2015 Earthquake

- 7.8 magnitude earthquake on April 25
- 7.3 magnitude earthquake on May 12
- 771,000 homes destroyed
- 8,000 lives lost
- 20,000 injured

In the Sindhupalchok region, 96.8% of all structures were destroyed. A year later, only 3% have been rebuilt. Despite agreements made to the Nepali people, the local government has not distributed funds in full to villages for the rebuilding of homes and medical facilities.

Inner Ocean cares about Nepal because we identify as global citizens. We all belong to the globe, no matter where we are from or where we live. This means that wherever we choose to focus our energy, we consider the place, the people, the animals, and the ecosystem as valuable and entitled to connection, compassion and healing.

Nepal Earthquake Relief Fundraiser

Traveling to Nepal would not have been possible without support from our incredible community. On April 5th we hosted a delicious Nepali dinner at Kathmandu II Restaurant in Boulder, Colorado. More than 70 people attended the dinner event and enjoyed a raffle, silent auction, live music and crafts while contributing to Inner Ocean's goal of journeying to Nepal a second time.

Donations Supply List

Burn Cream and Chapstick
Rehydrating Salts
Diamox
Neosporin
Imodium
Ibuprofen
Tylenol
Alcohol Swabs
Hand Sanitizer
Q-tips
Water Filters

Purchased in Nepal

Toothbrushes and toothpaste
Cough syrup
Blanket and Tarp
Warm clothes
Shoes

Treatment Supply List

Acupuncture Ear Seeds
Paraguard
Oregano Oil
Berberine
Wormwood
Ease Digestion
Huang Lian Su
Omphalia 11
Reishi Mushroom
Gingko Biloba
Gan Mao Ling
Jade Windscreen
Cordyceps
Fritillaria Syrup
Corydalis
Traumeel
Melatonin
Osha Lung Formula
Synbiotics
Childrens Clear & Release
Children's Clear Lung

Inner Ocean traveled to Nepal with 4 large suitcases full of nearly 200 pounds of supplies and 18,000 acupuncture needles. The Kathmandu dinner event was a wonderful success, with \$3,650 raised in support of our earthquake relief efforts.

We taught 4 educational programs while in Nepal:

- Cleaning your drinking water
- Self-care in earthquake aftermath
- Ergonomics of field work
- Women's reproductive and pregnancy care



PROJECT REPORTS

Thailand-Burma Project

Inner Ocean Empowerment Project is assisting in the development of a training program for medical workers at the Thai border that focuses on jungle medicine, emergency first aid, preventive medicine, and basic acupuncture protocols for pain relief and trauma recovery.

Several small clinics are located along the border of this politically tumultuous terrain. Many refugees of Burma choose to stay and serve despite landmines and the risk of deportation to Burma as a consequence of leaving a refugee camp.

Estimates assess that about 70% of the 1,200 mile-long border is planted with landmines. Over 2 million people have been displaced by the military destruction.

Currently, we are assisting in drafting a proposal that outlines the training program and the necessary budget for one of the largest clinics in all of Thailand to provide mobile service all along the border of Burma.

We have also been invited to teach once again in Thailand at Sulak Sivaraksa's Spirit in Education school in Bangkok. We are planning our trip in January 2018.



Standing Rock Project

The Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) caused a lot of ruckus this year because it is about more than just water. It is also about protecting burial grounds and sacred sites of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, as well as sustainable energy and oil practices. This is important because it will protect our vital resources for many generations to come. This is a global issue that goes beyond this one tribe, this one river, and this one oil company from Texas. Interestingly, the oil companies defend the pipeline as the "safest mode of transportation for crude oil," while simultaneously declaring a state of emergency after leaking 250,000 gallons in Alabama!



The bottom line is: pipelines are not safe.

Inner Ocean followed the situation in Standing Rock and knew it was time to act. Two certified Wilderness First Responders volunteered to drive over 12 hours to Standing Rock during September 2016. The idea behind the mission was to offer holistic first aid medical care, to donate cold weather supplies including firewood, and to evaluate what was needed at the camp after having spent time there.

With a week to prepare, Inner Ocean volunteer Chris Janaky and founder Mindi K. Counts arrived in Standing Rock with a car packed so heavily that the wheel wells scraped! They brought along numerous donated items: winter coats, hats, gloves, sleeping bags and firewood. These items were offered to the people of Standing Rock who were protecting the sacred waters.

During their time at Standing Rock, the Inner Ocean team was honored to speak with the founder of the Sacred Stone Camp, LaDonna Brave Bull Allard. When LaDonna heard the news in April of the proposed pipeline cutting through Standing Rock Reservation land and sacred sites, she built a fire with her family. She prayed that people would come and help protect their land and rights to clean drinking water. Five months later, with thousands of people supporting the cause, that same fire still burns and provides warmth for the community staying at the Sacred Stone Camp. Those prayers were heard around the world.

LaDonna encouraged Inner Ocean to build a weatherproof shelter to serve as the holistic health clinic at the Sacred Stone Camp. Inner Ocean had incredible support while building the shelter in classic North Dakota 40 mile per hour wind gusts. At the end of the day, unless tents were weighted down with a hundred pounds or more of sandbags, rocks, and supplies, only tipis stood tall.

Mni Wiconi! Water is Life!

Standing Rock Stats

8 fleece coats
13 winter jackets
14 wool sweaters
10 hats
5 scarves

4 pairs of winter gloves
2 pairs of wool socks
5 sleeping bags
1 down comforter
1 winter blanket

2 camp chairs
1 3-season tent
1 60-foot rope
Firewood

Total raised: \$350

PRESS

WOMEN'S WILDERNESS INSTITUTE

**Summit Sisters
Keynote Speaker
June 2016**



Women's Wilderness

Inner Ocean founder Mindi K. Counts dreamed about working with WWI in her early activist years. In 2016 her dream became a reality when they contacted her to speak at their annual Summit Sisters gathering in the mountains of Colorado. Mindi presented on "Waking the Global Heart", which is how she refers to developing the activist spirit, a necessary component of being alive during these times.

Mindi had long felt passionate about and resonated with the mission of WWI and continues to share their values around supporting women with nature-based practices. The mission of WWI is, "To strengthen the courage, confidence, and leadership qualities of girls and women through the challenge and support of group wilderness and community based experiences."



**WOMEN IN COMMUNITY
Women Powering Change
August 2016**

Every year Inner Ocean is invited to be one of 100 booths at the annual Women Powering Change gathering in Denver. This event is hosted by The Women's Foundation of Colorado and serves as a community-building, networking, celebratory event for women in Colorado who are working for change. This was Inner Ocean's second year being involved with such an incredible gathering of powerful women leaders.

REWILDING THE FILM

**Volunteer
March 2016**

Inner Ocean was contacted by a group of social activist filmmakers who were making a film to assist in bringing more awareness to the issues facing ex-prisoners in our society. They wanted to feature holistic health, acupuncture, and herbal medicine as a tool for working with PTSD and asked if we could take part in the creation of their documentary film by donating our time to an ex-prisoner. Of course we said yes!

2016 STATS

1192 acupuncture
treatments given

340 bodywork
treatments given

430 herbal
consultations given

SUPPLIES DONATED

39,600 acupuncture needles
10,000 alcohol swabs
160 hand sanitizers
1,000 Q-tips
5,000 acupressure ear seeds
40 protective face masks
3 boxes latex gloves
50 herbal pain patches
35 coats and jackets
21 hats, scarves, winter gloves, wool socks

7 sleeping bags, blankets and comforters
2 camp chairs
1 3-season tent
1 60-foot rope
Firewood
Handmade dolls

\$350 for Standing Rock
\$3,650 from Nepal fundraising dinner
Plus other donations

THE BREATHE NETWORK Contributing Author July 2016

Inner Ocean was asked to contribute to a book on trauma and holistic medicine for healthcare workers who work in this specific field. We were asked not only because of our international work with victims of sex-trafficking, but also because of our work in disaster relief, with veterans, with people struggling with addiction, and more. You might even say that Inner Ocean IS LARGELY an organization that supports the transformation and healing of trauma, as each and every project and community we engage in holds within it a traumatic experience at its inception.

The Breathe Network is a trauma-based organization that connects survivors of sexual violence with trauma-informed, sliding-scale, holistic healing arts practitioners. They provide training and education for healing arts practitioners in understanding the impacts of sexual violence and how to provide trauma-informed care within their practice. They are truly an incredible organization that we believe contributes on a daily basis to global healing.





HOW TO HELP

Support the Mission of Inner Ocean

Empower vulnerable populations by building internal resources to reduce the impact of oppression.

Use Your Expertise

We have several immediate and numerous long-term projects that could utilize your unique skill set!

Get Involved

Fill out our volunteer application online. Let us know about a project you are interested in supporting. Or maybe you are dreaming about your own project that fits with the mission of Inner Ocean.

Mentorship

Learn with us! Discover your passion and share it with the world. We have several upcoming training opportunities to help you get the support you need to live YOUR vision.

HOW TO HELP

Great Need

As a part of continuing to be of service, IO will travel both within and outside of the United States. Our efforts will include offering services (holistic medicine and education) as well as funneling resources into places of great need.

Education

IO foresees needing to keep education as a strong part of its mission, in addition to offering holistic medicine. Education is a gift that can't be taken away through poverty and oppression and its impact can be seen permeating communities, generation after generation.

Long-term Programs

IO will assess the possibility of setting up long-term programs that continue to funnel resources into the areas we visit. In order to uphold our long-term efforts, our goal is to draw from local, sustainable resources and leaders in the communities we are working in.

Local Projects

Even though America is the second wealthiest country in the world, its resources are not distributed equally. This leaves Americans with their own struggles of poverty, violence, addiction, and injustice. This is why for every project IO engages in overseas, we plan to keep some portion of our budget to continue to work locally. Check for "Local Projects" on our website at inneroceanempowermentproject.org/direct-relief-projects/

Creation of a Stable Foundation

With the mission of IO to become an organization that is able to funnel holistic medical and educational resources as needed in a particular environment and for a specific cause, financial support for the organization will need to be steady and stable. Creating a stable financial foundation furthers our ability to sustain our mission. We are currently seeking a grant writer to assist in this foundational goal.

Volunteerism

IO offers access to individuals, professionals, and students of all ages and backgrounds to have an opportunity to participate in heart-oriented service work. This includes everything from joining in on a project that fits your heart's calling or offering your unique skills to the vision and stabilization of our growing organization.

Collaboration

IO is always seeking to collaborate or partner with organizations and individuals on a similar mission of service. If you or your organization has a vision that you feel would parallel with IO's, by all means get in touch with us!

Flow Fund

We would like to establish a Flow Fund here at IO in order to build our capacity to give microgrants to individuals and organizations who are participating in social change.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to the Inner Ocean 2016 donors

Karen DeClerk
Billy Halax
Kelly Kessen
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Janine Malcolm
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Doren Day
And many anonymous donors!

And to our volunteers

Brittany Sanelli
Megan McCullough
Jonathan Grassi
Chris Janaky





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How to Donate

Visit our website.

inneroceanempowermentproject.org

Click "Donate" to pay with PayPal

Send a check.

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Lafayette, CO 80026

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