

ONF

Ono Niha Foundation

Newsletter – October 2014



Jill and Peter Hofman (Australian-based project manager for ONF) spent 6 weeks on the Ono Niha Foundation base in south Nias in August /September. Here is their “story” (written by Peter).

We had a very busy but rewarding stay, helping with the Foundation’s programs of local employment, education, children with disabilities, community health and Holidays with Purpose. Robyn (dental assistant) and David (TESOL teacher) Hughes-Tulloh, Sandra Hofman (nurse), Tracey MacGovern (dental assistant) and Robyn Preston (teacher) helped us for 2-4 weeks at various times during our stay.

Local employment

The coconut oil factory run by Matt (the Foundation chairman) is a key employer in the local area. It is also essential to the Foundation because a profitable factory allows Matt to run the Foundation on a largely volunteer basis.

Matt and I have ongoing discussions how to improve the operating efficiency of the factory. We installed a temperature controller for the incubation room where the coconut milk is held at about 40°C to allow separation of the oil from the milk. Matt has tried various heating options in the past but we are re-testing electric heaters in combination with the controller. The next objective is to build a system that burns the surplus coconut shell to provide clean heat for the room, and using the controller to manage the temperature.

Thanks to Dan Sole and Gary Quinn for building the temperature controller.

Lush Ltd is the major customer for the virgin coconut oil from the factory. Lyndsey and Cadi from Lush UK visited the factory in late August to view production and explore options for additional products to increase local employment. We



Lyndsey and Cadi observing the coconut oil production process

had exciting discussions about additional coconut products, essential oils (e.g. petuli) and special cocoa butter. We were impressed with Lush's passion for supporting small businesses to improve local wellbeing, and we are very thankful for their ongoing support and desire to build the partnership. Thank you Lyndsey and Cadi.

To assist the construction of an aqua therapy pool on the base (see below), Peter and Narelle Dart have donated funds to purchase a concrete block-making machine to produce the blocks for the pool. The machine will also be used to develop a micro-business. Thank you Peter and Narelle.

Education

The new Centre: The Ono Niha Community Development Centre is now open for business!! It was built with funds from the Netherlands and the Direct Aid Program (DAP) of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta. We were very excited to work in the Centre for the first time and to dream about how the Centre will help the community.

English and computer skills: The DAP grant provided desks, computers, books and software for English and computer classes. After-school classes have now started in the centre, with the Foundation paying a dedicated teacher to conduct after school classes, initially for the scholarships students (see below).

David spent time with several senior English teachers and visited several schools. He now has a good idea of how to help the English teachers be more effective. The plan is to provide training to these teachers so they can give more effective lessons within the existing curriculum. David is willing to provide advice to other TESOL teachers wanting to volunteer with the Foundation. We are encouraging the students and teachers to use the small resource library and computers at the Centre.

We are also providing vocational training in dental and first aid (see below).

The Centre is equipped with a mobile kitchen. Chef classes will train locals in chef-quality techniques regarding hygiene etc so they can work in hotels and the many surf charter vessels around the Nias and Mentawi Islands. Classes will be run when suitable volunteers are available.

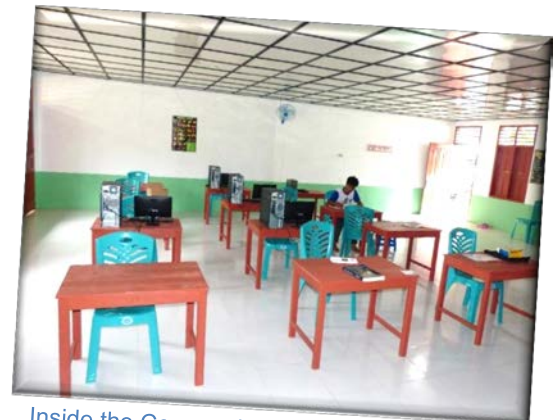
Scholarships: This program is going well, with 21 students supported by sponsors in Australia. The finances are in good shape and the procedures are working well. We met all the students and families and they were very thankful for the support. Additional donations paid for care packages (a large bucket, rice, noodles, eggs, toothbrushes, medicines and a bath towel) for each family,



The new Ono Niha Community Development Centre



Peter, Jill and Tracey



Inside the Community Centre, with desks and computers



Matt talking to some of the scholarship students and families about the program and the care packages

plus another 5 for very poor families. We also invited the families to a celebration at the new Centre – a fun time.

Children with Disabilities

This has focussed on aqua therapy but will now be expanded to Centre therapy and home therapy and support.

Aqua therapy: The aqua therapy classes are continuing two mornings per week with Iwan, who has received basic training from Patricia and other volunteers. The classes are producing significant results. For example, Berlina (7 years old with cerebral palsy) could not walk but is now walking by holding one hand of an adult. She is much happier. Randy (7 year old with significant physical impairment from a high fever soon after birth) can now stand by pulling himself up with a table or chair.

On-going access to the pool is at risk because the owner is selling the site and the pool is in danger of being destroyed because of continual erosion of Lagundri Beach. To ensure the future of the program and increase integration between the water and Centre-based therapy activities, a pool will be built on the Foundation base. About \$4000 has been raised so far. Thank you to Patricia and the crew in Batemans Bay/Moiruya NSW, including The Olive Tree Cafe, Ernie & Carmel Fruit Markets, Nerida Bourke and Batemans Bay Highschool. We also thank Steve and Dior Mahnken, and the lucky ones who came to the Mad Hatters Party at Peter and Jills.

The pool will be constructed with core-filled concrete blocks, requiring the purchase of a machine to produce sufficiently strong blocks and a delay in the start of construction. The machine has been ordered thanks to the donation from Peter and Narelle. David and I started planning the pool based on Australian design standards and we hope to start construction next year if we have enough funds.

Therapy at the Centre: The DAP grant purchased specialist flotation devices, pool games, therapy aids (exercise balls, dexterity games etc), several child wheelchairs and a walking frame for use in the pool and the Community Centre. David built two scooter boards (like skate boards). The disabilities children have started using these new resources and it was so good to see the joy in their eyes as they realise that they too are special. The children can come to the centre any weekday. One day per week the parents can leave their child at the centre and have a break.

Home therapy and support: Iwan will observe the



Iwan providing aqua therapy for Prita



Berlina using one of the therapy aids with her mum



Randy on the scooter board, encouraged by his dad and sister

child in their home environment to identify exercises and aids to help the child in and around the home. ONF has engaged local craftsmen to build mobility aids based on guidelines from several text books (e.g. "Disabled Village Children - a guide to community health workers, rehabilitation workers and families"). The aids will be loaned to the families for 2 months (extended if required) but will remain the property of the centre.

Let me introduce Berkat. He is about 6 years old and has severe Rickets (calcium deficiency, often from lack of vitamin D). Most of his long bones are badly bent and he cannot walk. His father is on another island looking for work and his mother has to work the rubber trees. Berkat fell last month while being looked after by a friend (his mum had to work) and broke his hip. It has not set well at all. He is busting to go to school but cannot without a wheel chair and someone to help him. The Foundation will build him a wheel chair and Jill and I will support the family so they can provide Berkat with better food and calcium/Vitamin D supplements. We will raise funds for a thorough medical examination to find out how best to improve his calcium nutrition, and how to correct his legs enough so he can at least walk. In the meantime he will come to aqua therapy and the Centre whenever his mum has time to bring him. Please consider helping Berkat if you can.

We are novices on how to help these children, but we are doing our best. We desperately need advice from qualified persons, preferably by volunteering time at the Foundation base. Can you help, or do you know someone who can?

Community health

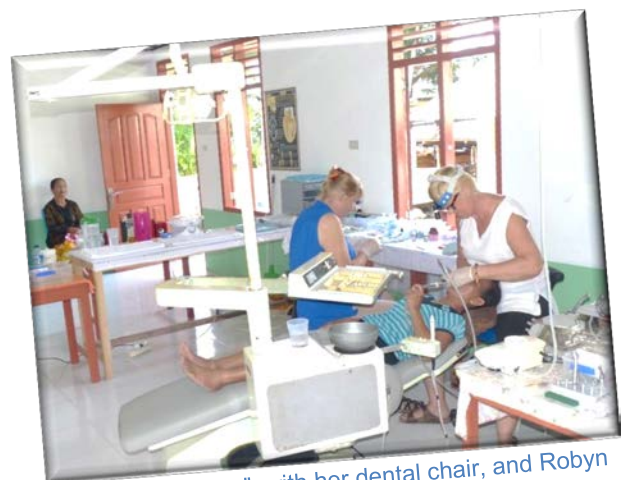
Dental: Jill was like a "piglet in mud" this visit. She was given about 1000 toothbrushes and about \$1000 of dental supplies from Australian supporters. The DAP grant purchased a medical compressor and ultrasonic cleaner. If that was not enough, a Medan equipment supplier donated a dental chair – an old one that needed a good scrub but the basics worked. It made such a difference for the patients and for Jill. To top it all, we could set up all the equipment in the new Centre (the "surgery") instead of on our bungalow veranda. What a difference, and much deserved for Jill after about 10 years of setting up and packing down after every clinic, working off tables and benches etc. Oh, and the other blessing was having qualified dental nurses (Tracey and Robyn) to assist – far more efficient than me trying to help.



Berkat in one of the new wheelchairs.



Berkat playing ball with mum, and playing with the new therapy games with his brother and Robyn



Jill's new "surgery", with her dental chair, and Robyn Hughes-Tulloch assisting



Tracey (middle) and Robyn helping Jill



Jill training Pinta who started a dental nursing degree in September

Jill worked every week day from about 8 am - 2 pm with few of the previous years' challenges from sore back or sciatic. Iwan did scale and cleans on the patients before seeing Jill. Together they achieved so much.

First aid: Sandra braved the transition from the Tasmania winter to the equator to provide first aid clinics and much-needed skills for about 2 weeks. She was given about \$600 to purchase medicines. Sandra provided basic training to allow Mimi to continue some of the first aid services. We all appreciated Sandra's skills and enthusiasm. Thank you Sandra.

On-going: Iwan is now sufficiently skilled to continue dental hygiene sessions two mornings per week, with wages paid by ONF. These will be free until the end of the year, but from January ONF will test charging about \$1 for those who can afford it (the poor will not be charged). Iwan he is now working full time for the Foundation – our first full time employee!

Jill also provided some training to Pinta who started a dental nursing degree in Medan in September this year. We will try to employ her again next year and hopefully instil a passion to take over the dental program in the future.



Sandra removing puss from a large boil at a clinic in a village church

Holidays with Purpose

David and I removed some partitions in the smaller bungalow on the Base to provide more room and to accommodate a king and single bed. We now have two comfortable bungalows on site, each with their own kitchen and shower/toilet.

Matt bought in about 1800 small trucks of sand to build a large beach (and "soccer field") in front of the bungalows and onto the reef. The place now looks like "paradise". The bungalows are available for rent by volunteers, but also for those who just want to have a break from the rat race. The rent supports the Foundation's programs so please consider – you will enjoy your stay and make a difference at the same time.



Iwan "cleaning up" the patients before they are treated by Jill. Iwan will continue this service in Jill's absence



The renovated bungalow with two beds



The new "beach" in front of the bungalow. Love the mobile!!



The bungalows – before the beach