

Hands on India 2020

On returning on this my 6th Hands on India trip since 2009, I can only say they keep getting better. All the work in preparing to take a team of 26 chiropractors and 4 assistants and fund raising to reach our \$100,000 goal becomes worth it from the moment we arrive.

During our stay we stayed with Father Felix at Seva Kendra, Siliguri, West Bengal. As we have been working together for the past 8 years, returning means we are well organised, the days are full but so rewarding and we can measure the progress.

Each day we divide into 4 jeeps and head to the 4 outreach locations, where there are local village tea pickers, rock breaker and labourers are waiting to see us. They present with such a variety of conditions and have little access to medical care. As the week progressed the local hospital in one area started sending its stroke and head injury patients with their physio as they could see their patients improving. Each trip I am amazed at the impact we can make on their health and wellbeing in 2 short weeks. I can only explain it in that their bodies are so damaged, yet they are so strong, that they seem to improve so much more than we would see at home. Similarly children with disabilities improved remarkably. During our stay we gave over 3500 adjustments.

We also visited the 6 schools (700 children) we fund in the tea plantations and rock breaker communities. It is so rewarding to see how happy, studious and well they are progressing with each visit. These children are assessed, wormed and receive adjustments during our visits. I also spoke with teachers and saw the improvements we made with last years fundraising including periphery fences (to keep animals out) new roofs, text books and equipment purchased – truly amazing how far the funds go!



400+ women travelled by truck for hours to attend a Women's Empowerment event. These women represent the 2700+ women we fund. Small groups of 8-10 meet regularly with facilitators we fund to discuss their challenges and find ways to resolve them. They also create group bank accounts, access health funding, learn to organic garden, deal with child marriage, right to education, domestic violence and community issues. It was wonderful to hear them speak on their achievements and witness their education session. We all loved dancing with them as a celebration to end the event.

Visiting Flame of Hope was a highlight for many of us. An amazing group of disabled children under the care of a nun who educates them to bring out their talents and create a family for life. We all came away truly inspired at what can be achieved. Ashagram is an orphanage we regularly visit. It is also inspirational as we adjust the kids and see how well they are developing and how loved and happy they are. Other activities included attending a fun filled sports afternoon for 4 of the schools.



The teamwork of our group was outstanding and together we achieved so much. Our days were long, there was much bumping around in jeeps to reach all our locations and we had education and case debrief sessions most evenings to make the most of our learning experience. I really love the collaborative approach of problem solving on difficult cases and experiential teaching of the newer grads. It is always exciting to see the personal growth of our volunteers and improvement in patients can be achieved in such a short intense time.

I really appreciate the generous donations so many of you given, not only this year, but in previous years. It really is so wonderful to see what that money is achieving, in educating children in the schools, funding Women's empowerment groups, school repairs and maintenance, providing health camps such as this and having funds to provide follow up surgical care in important cases.

I can assure you all the funds go direct to those most in need and all our trip costs are self funded. Thank you for your support.

Sue Ferguson
2020 trip leader.

