

Enfranchised by Rachel Hess

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. -Margaret Mead

Last month I had the opportunity to travel to Wisconsin and meet other POCA members at POCA Fest. A group of us got to talking about how vital the membership drive is to sustaining community acupuncture and why POCA is so important.

What are cooperatives?

POCA is a cooperative – an organization that is owned and run jointly by its members, who share in the benefits of its existence and work to uphold its growth, development and future. The cooperative business model encourages collaboration among members by sharing information and training so members can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. The more members there are, the more possibility for collaboration and growth.

Why does it matter?

Upon joining in 2011, I immediately realized that this cooperative was different than any I had experienced. I was amazed by the openness in the POCA community and the thoughtfulness of the people involved. I read the forums and blogs in shock, they are full of stories about real people helping others with their clinics, the triumphs and challenges in businesses and life, sharing stories of healing and growth in their communities and spirit. These are important discussions out there in the forums for everyone to glean knowledge from them.

POCA is not hiding behind a shiny curtain, managed by the all-powerful. POCA thrives on member participation! These were the sort of people Margaret Meade was talking about! I could help in my own little way to bring more clinics to more people in need and help people in my community feel better. It is a pretty amazing thing. I can do it, you can do it, your neighbor can do it. Together we really can make a difference. POCA has proved this to me after becoming disenfranchised with “the normal” way of going about business and profit- a world where the bottom line comes before consumer comfort or participation. It has been very refreshing to know I am a part of a group of citizens committed to bringing change in the way the world thinks about acupuncture.

Community Acupuncture clinics should be in EVERY community!

Becoming a member is one of the biggest ways to assure community acupuncture continues to grow. Your dues help other clinics get started or expand with POCA microloans.

So if you feel like everyone, everywhere should have access to acupuncture and affordable acupuncture education, tell someone about POCA. Send a friend into their local clinic with one of your complimentary “free treatment” card you received when becoming a member. Every little bits helps. It is a lot like those tiny needles!