



Rauni Prittinen King, RN, MIH

HEALING THROUGH TOUCH

By Judith A. Habert

WHEN YOU HAVE SPENT OVER 20 years in critical care nursing, there isn't much you haven't seen. There are certain events in life that bring us to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). For anyone who has spent any time in an ICU, whether as a patient or a visitor, you know that the majority of what is found is not like the TV medical show ailments like train and airplane wrecks, gunshot wounds or impalement. What brings most of us to the intensive care unit are diseases that finally get to the point where our body can no longer handle what we have been doing to it for the past 10, 20 or 30 years.

Rauni Prittinen King, RN, an accomplished business woman and foundation president, a highly-sought consultant in healthcare and the co-founder and executive director of the Integrative health and wellness center, Pacific Pearl La Jolla, had seen it all as an ICU nurse. She loved her profession but was bothered with a feeling that something was missing in her early days. She would watch patients come in and out of her unit, and many more, not as lucky wouldn't make it out. She felt deeply for the suffering she saw, but especially when she would see 'repeat offenders,' those who came in regularly with heart problems, strokes and other ailments. It wasn't until she attended a workshop in energy healing that she finally felt as if she had found help for the suffering.

This workshop was just the beginning for Rauni. It was the beginning of a

new life focus that wasn't fully clear at the beginning but ultimately brought her to a global stage. She explains, "After attending that first energy healing seminar I knew I had discovered what was missing. In every study done on the subject, there are similar findings. Compassion and intentional touch help to heal."

Rauni was ecstatic when she found the missing piece to the puzzle. She knew her patients were getting the best that conventional medicine had to offer, but now, she realized there was more to getting better than medical care and prescription drugs. She says, "I knew what they were missing – healing. When people are ill, they are in physical crisis, but they also are in an emotional, mental and spiritual crisis. We don't have a cure for misery, so we give patients drugs like Valium to get over anxiety and emotional pain. Once the patient is taken off the drug, they end up back in the same place. They are afraid of dying, they are afraid of disability, and they are most likely afraid of the medical procedures they are about to endure."

"The practice of Healing Touch® and energy healing was what I believed was missing from the nursing practice," Rauni says. "Once I realized this, I could not get enough education on the subject. I became a certified practitioner, and now I teach on all five levels of the curriculum. This was how I started on the path of holistic and Integrative Medicine."

Rauni continued learning more and more about Holistic Nursing and went on with her education, earning her certification as a Holistic Nurse through the American Holistic Nurse Association, and a Masters Degree in Integrative Health. She also became a Certified Healing Touch® Practitioner and Instructor.

Rauni adds, "I knew I was on the right track and watched the significant effect I was having on patients."

A coordinator and instructor of Healing Touch® workshops at Scripps Hospitals since 1993, Rauni also provides classes at Pacific Pearl La Jolla and is the lead instructor for the Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System. After creating Healing Touch® of Finland in 1998, she has been teaching Healing Touch in Europe and India as well as North America.

In 1995, she was intrigued to follow up after hearing rumors that Scripps was going to do a Holistic lifestyle research study for cardiac patients. She applied for the job and was hired since they were looking for someone with a strong cardiac background.

The program, Dr. Dean Ornish's Program for Reversing Heart Disease trial, was exciting and groundbreaking. The plan was to take very sick heart patients and place them in this new research program of lifestyle changes instead of treating them with a stent, angioplasty, or open-heart surgery. It included a specific diet, yoga, meditation, exercise and support groups. Rauni says, "This was when I met Dr. Mimi Guarneri, who was an Interventional Cardiologist at Scripps Clinic and Scripps Green Hospital. In the spring of 1996, our first task was to interview patients for the program."

It didn't take long for Rauni and Dr. Guarneri to realize that this program needed to be put in place for all patients. So, after much discussion, planning and great determination, they wrote the proposal for what is now known as Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine. "External funding came from grateful patients and donors, and Scripps gave us the go-ahead. This is how it all began, and it

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still remains a part of the Scripps Health System,” she adds.

She moved into management and teaching at the new center while also treating patients. After 25 years of full time employment at Scripps Health, Rauni had touched many lives.

In 2013, Rauni and Dr. Guarneri achieved their dream of co-founding a private Integrative health and wellness center that featured a team of experts in Conventional, Integrative and Natural Medicine. She is both co-founder and executive director of Guarneri Integrative Health, Inc. at Pacific Pearl La Jolla, a center where state-of-the-art Conventional Medicine meets the best of global

HIMR provide programs for Integrative Medicine to help transform or develop professional practices and healthcare systems. Rauni is president of HIMR, and her other roles at The Pearl include director, healthcare provider and instructor. She adds, “It was fun to use the knowledge from my Interior Design degree to create a healing environment.”

Her reach has moved beyond Pacific Pearl La Jolla. Her experience as Nurse Case Manager in the Dean Ornish program, her development and management of Integrative Medicine centers and her career in critical care nursing has given her an incredible background. This made her an obvious choice to direct and

program she helped to create. In one course, she was assigned a project in which she had to interview a subject she admired greatly. There was a man who fit the bill – someone who had been running charitable foundations for many years. After conducting the interview, Rauni was greatly inspired to create a foundation.

In 2011, Rauni founded Miraglo Foundation, along with Dr. Mimi Guarneri. Miraglo Foundation’s vision is ‘Healing people and transforming lives through education, health and research.’ She serves as its dynamic president, and both are equally involved and dedicated to the needs of the many thousands of people that Miraglo Foundation serves



healing traditions for a personalized whole-person approach that addresses mind, body and spirit – and where a wellness assessment lasts 90 minutes and includes both a Medical Doctor and a Naturopathic Doctor. Spa and wellness services like acupuncture, massage, herbal tub baths and facials are also offered. She designed the center to include a space for conferences, workshops and community lectures that has full video/live streaming capacities. Pacific Pearl La Jolla is also home to the Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine (AIHM), Miraglo Foundation, Consciousness and Healing Initiative (CHI) and Holistic and Integrative Medicine Resources Inc. (HIMR), a business and consulting unit they both founded. Among other initiatives, Rauni and Dr. Guarneri through

coordinate national and international holistic and integrative medicine conferences for physicians, nurses and other healthcare providers. These annual conferences include ‘Natural Supplements: An Evidence-Based Approach’ conference and the ‘Integrative and Holistic Nursing Conference,’ both of which are held in San Diego and bring thousands of healthcare professionals to the area. She also launched a not-for-profit public charity, Miraglo Foundation, which supports projects and people in the U.S. and around the world.

Rauni, who spent a good portion of her life caring for others, was always searching for ways that she could do more. When she was working towards her Master’s Degree in Integrative Health from National University, it was a pro-

today. Having interviewed the charitable foundation expert and also having worked with the Scripps Foundation, Rauni was familiar with restrictions that often were caused by how a foundation was created. She wanted to be certain that Miraglo Foundation would have a broad reach. She explains, “It was critical that I learned how to create a foundation that allowed us to accomplish all that we wanted – supporting Integrative Medicine and education, research, and service to the underserved globally. We didn’t want limits. We had a long list of what should be included, and we knew that we wanted it to be local, national, and global. It was a blessing to spend this time creating what we wanted, because we can do a lot of work not only in San Diego but in developing nations.”

Miraglo Foundation has accomplished many remarkable feats in the short time it has been in existence. Their work is global. A major project has been the support of the Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine (AIHM), which Dr. Guarneri founded and where Rauni serves as a member of the Board of Directors. A focus of Miraglo Foundation is serving the under-served, and they support several San Diego initiatives, among others. Internationally, their support of the Sri Narayani Hospital and Research Center in the Tamil Nadu region in rural-Southern India has helped it grow from a one-room clinic to a 250-bed multi-specialty hospital serving thousands of patients monthly. Rauni says, "Currently, on average, five people each day who come into the hospital will lose their lives because the center does not have the ability to perform angioplasty, stenting and open-heart surgery. Now, we are raising funds for a much needed cardiac catheterization laboratory and open heart surgical suite."

It is difficult for Rauni and the other foundation members to bear this distress when they travel to the hospital because the staff members are doing all they can. Even with great doctors and nurses, they can't save lives without the necessary equipment. "Unfortunately," Rauni adds, "All the equipment comes from the same manufacturers used around the globe, so the cost in developing countries is the same as in wealthy metropolitan parts of the world. It is simply unaffordable. The people in this region of India have a hard time feeding their families...and losing one of their family members to a curable ailment is impossible to accept."

The list of organizations and projects Miraglo Foundation works with is growing every day. Check the article on page 12 to see some of the other wonderful causes taken on by the Foundation.

Constantly traveling around the world, Rauni is spreading the important messages of Integrative Medicine, education, compassion and service to improve global health. She says, "I went to Geneva last year to the World Health Organization's World Health Assembly representing Miraglo Foundation, as part of the delegation of the Global Health Council. This coming October, I will present in

Brazil at a large healthcare conference, and in November of 2017, we will be going to the Vatican for a World Health Organization event where Dr. Guarneri will be presenting. That event is sponsored by the World Health Organization, UCSD and Miraglo Foundation."

Rauni loves what she does, even when asked if her time as a critical nurse was a difficult period for her. She responds, "All of my experiences have led me to where I am today. Because of my background, I have a lot of credibility in several areas of healthcare. My range has allowed me to enjoy many different experiences."

Her VA teaching opportunity came about due to a study of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that Dr. Guarneri and Rauni did while they were at Scripps. Active duty Marines with PTSD at Camp Pendleton in California were returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Rauni explains, "We used Healing Touch® to help with the PTSD symptoms. In September of 2012, our findings were published in the publication, 'Military Medicine.' The study had to be short, since the Marines were moving from place to place. We provided six treatments in a 3-week period, but even in that time, depression dropped, there was an overall reduction of symptoms, and hostility levels significantly decreased."

After seeing their positive results, she was invited to teach Healing Touch® to healthcare providers at the Greater Los Angeles VA. The VA is the biggest health care system in the country with 153 hospitals, 773 outpatient centers and 260 Vet Counseling Centers.

Thanks to the teachings of Rauni and others in the medical profession, Integrative Medicine has moved to the forefront of a previously conventional medical model. I asked Rauni if the climate has changed with traditional physicians and if there existed an increased acceptance of Integrative Medicine?

She says, "Yes, the tide has turned, and we are seeing more traditional doctors willing to add Integrative Medicine to their practices. We are in the process of creating the healthcare that we would want for ourselves and our loved ones.

That is why we wanted Pacific Pearl La Jolla, our Integrative health and wellness center, to be a place where our patients would feel comfortable. It is designed to be more like home and less like a medical center. That is why we don't have a waiting room. We have a living room. Some of our patients will just drop by to sit in our living room to relax, and we love that. Things have changed with traditional healthcare. We have over 70 medical schools in this country that now teach Integrative Medicine. When I left Scripps, it was only 35, so Integrative Medicine is the way of the future."

I asked Rauni what her tidbits of advice would be for our readers and she shared the following:

- I ask patients, "Where would you be if there were no obstacles? What would you do if nothing stood in your way?"

- Go deep within and see what you really want to do with your life. Often, we live our lives according to other peoples' desires. We don't listen to our intuition; we don't listen to our own heart; we listen to other people who tell us what we should do. Intuition is the heart. Logical thinking is the head, and although there are only 18 inches between the two, this is often the longest distance we have to go. When you follow your heart, you don't determine your outcome, but you have a vision of where you want to go. Often people will think of every obstacle between where they are and where they want to be. So, I ask, 'What is your passion? Follow it.'

- There was a study done on patients with cancer, and the aim was to find out what happened to cancer patients given the news that they had a limited time remaining in their life. The purpose was to see why the outcome was different for two patients who were both told they had five weeks to live. Some died exactly in five weeks, yet others lived 20 years. This shows that when we get passed the restrictions we place on ourselves, we can achieve great things.

Learn more at <http://pacificpearlla-jolla.com> and <http://miraglofoundation.org>.