

The Herald of Randolph

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Remote Medical Clinic in Borneo Is Recognized

by Randolph Church By Bob Eddy



Kinari Webb, a Yale Medical School graduate who is dedicating her life to serve a remote population in the Borneo rain forest, was presented with the Tikkun Olam, "Healing of the World" Award by Bethany Church in Randolph earlier this month. (Herald / Bob Eddy)

Bethany Church, UCC, has conferred the Tikkun Olam, "Healing of the World," Award upon Dr. Kinari Webb for her work in health care and rain forest conservation in Borneo.

"It is our hope that this award will serve as encouragement to Dr. Webb, and that her remarkable story will inspire others," said Bethany pastor Kathy Eddy.

Kinari Webb lived in the Upper Valley with her husband, Campbell Webb, as he studied at [Dartmouth](#) in 2004. They became members of the Taftsville Mennonite Church, developing friendships which have strengthened as word of the couple's work has spread.

Where's the story?



As part of her undergraduate biology studies, Kinari Webb volunteered to work for a year at Gunung Palung National Park, in Borneo. With more than 5000 species of trees, it seemed unspoiled in 1993.

All was not perfect, however. One day a research assistant cut his palm. The wound didn't appear serious, but he acted as though it were life-threatening.

Webb began to realize that, in remote areas, even routine injuries can prove fatal. She cleaned and closed the cut, and discovered her life's calling. She would become a physician and return to [Indonesia](#).

To receive training for medicine in one of the poorest, most isolated places on earth, Webb enrolled in Yale Medical School. Before completion of her residency, a 2004 tsunami's devastation strengthened her resolve.

Return to Gunung Palung

Gunung Palung is two airplane flights and a two-hour drive through swamp from [Indonesia's](#) capital, Jakarta. Returning after 13 years, Webb was shocked to find huge portions of the park's rain forest clear-cut by villagers living on as little as \$13 a month. Much of the park was threatened by illegal logging by villages ringing the 558-square-mile region.

Webb recognized a direct link between the environmental destruction, and the desperate state of villagers' health.

She recruited college and medical school classmates to help raise money through her fledgling foundation, Health in [Harmony](#), opening her clinic in 2007. It is a modest six-room facility surrounded by gardens.

Since the clinic's inception, 9000 patients have been treated. Dr Webb and her colleagues established a program for TB that is facilitated by community health workers, and built a pay-through-labor system to make health care accessible to all.

In an innovative twist, she also created an incentive program through which villages are actively preventing illegal logging in exchange for extra health care benefits.

All of this was accomplished with expenditure of \$137K in 2007, and a projected \$200K this year. These sums include salaries for 42 staff. Dr. Webb draws no salary, supporting herself with her husband's income from rain forest research through Harvard.

Believing that patients should provide a reasonable fee for their medical service, she has entered into some very creative barter payments. These have included hand-weaving mats for sale in the U.S., growing seedling trees for reforestation, providing manure for the clinic's extensive organic gardens, raising chickens, and providing laundry service, organic gardening and other work for the clinic.

There are now plans for increased maternal health services, and a new hospital. Webb is also exploring the sale of carbon credits, to fund expanded conservation and reforestation.

For more information on the clinic in Borneo, go to healthinharmony.org.

The Tikkun Olam Award was instituted by Bethany's pastors in 2006 to honor individuals whose humanitarian efforts have global impact.

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