



June 6 - 7, 2009 - Weekend Edition

LIFE & LEISURE

On a journey to help others

Photographer shows work in an exhibition to raise funds for medical clinic in Armenia.

By Joyce Rudolph News-Press

Photographer Sara Anjargolian is focusing on making people more aware of the need for health care in Armenia.

Anjargolian, who grew up in Glendale, lived in Armenia from 2002 to 2004. An attorney for the city of Los Angeles, she went to Armenia on a Fulbright Grant to teach law at the American University of Armenia. She spent her free time capturing in documentary-style photography life in Armenia's most economically deprived areas, she said. Ten of her photographs will be featured along with those of Vahé D'Ala and Sevag Vje in the show "A Journey to Armenia" on Friday at the A&I

FYI

WHAT: "A Journey to Armenia" a benefit hosted by the Real Medicine Foundation for its Armenia Clinic Fund

WHERE: A&I Photography Gallery, 933 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood

COST: Pre-event tickets at \$25 available at www.itsmyself.com; \$30 at the door

CONTACT: www.realmedicinefoundation.org

woman works with the Real Medicine Foundation's concept," she said. "If there had been a clinic, the woman might have taken her granddaughter to the clinic instead of the rooster to the courtyard."

Armenia is one of more than a dozen countries receiving assistance from the Real Medicine Foundation,



Courtesy of Sara Anjargolian

Sara Anjargolian is one of three photographers in a group show benefiting health care for Armenia.

Gallery in Hollywood. Proceeds will benefit the Los Angeles-based Real Medicine Foundation's Armenia Clinic Fund. The foundation provides aid to 13 countries around the world.

This is Anjargolian's first time to work on a fundraising project with the foundation. Having lived in Armenia, she said she has an affinity for the group's purpose, helping to build a medical clinic and raising awareness of the need for health care in far-off villages.

"I know how important it is to bring more health-related infrastructure to Armenia," she said. "People there can't afford preventive health care, and they wait until the condition worsens. A clinic would help them to get preventive care."

One of her photographs in the show illustrates that need for medical care, she said. It is of an elderly woman sitting in a church courtyard with a rooster on her lap. The woman had brought the rooster to the church with the belief that its sacrifice would help her granddaughter at home who was ill, Anjargolian said. "The story of the elderly

said founder Martina Fuchs, a Los Angeles pediatrician. Fuchs was approached at a fundraiser by former Glendale resident Nairy Ghazourian to work on the project in Armenia.

"There are areas not close to the capital city, Yerevan, that suffer from extreme poverty," Fuchs said. "In the past there hasn't been a focus on those areas. Since it's close to Nairy's heart, she approached me to support one of these areas in Armenia which has no access to health care."

The area chosen for the new clinic is in the southeastern part of Armenia, Fuchs said.

Ghazourian is now the country director for the Armenia project and helps with fundraising, Fuchs added. Fuchs and Ghazourian took their passions of helping people and have joined together to help Armenia, Ghazourian said.

"Helping the poor and needy is my calling," she said. "In Armenia, I know the need there. It's just been forgotten."

Fuchs and Ghazourian worked to get a needs as-

See JOURNEY, Page A11

JOURNEY

Continued from A9

assessment put together and received input from researchers on the best place for a clinic, Ghazourian said.

"We are two passionate people who came together and they decided to do something," she said. "My dream is to give to the less fortunate in any way I can to increase their quality of life."

The foundation works with other organizations in a country to help poor areas with a continuing source of health-care services, said Burbank native Robert Kornswiet, the legal advisor to the foundation's board and a volunteer.

"The foundation works with several organizations to get things done, Kornswiet said.

In Mozambique, Africa, foundation representatives partnered with Vanderbilt University, a company in South Africa that builds vans

and civic leaders to create mobile medical labs that go from village to village to provide medical treatment.

"So what we are doing with this fundraiser for Armenia is to build a clinic that will help about 8,000 people on a permanent basis," he said.

Fuchs was inspired to start the foundation after she volunteered her medical services during the aftermath of the tsunami that hit Southeast

Asia in 2004, she said. She volunteered in Sri Lanka from February to March 2005.

"When I arrived in the capital and drove along the coast, it looked like something I'd never seen before," she said. There were miles and miles of destruction along the coast and inland where people were living in tents trying to survive among the ruins of houses they have lived in all their lives."

She knew she had to go help there after watching media reports, Fuchs said.

"Watching CNN and *cmn.com*, seeing the looks on the children's faces, I'm a pediatrician and I've never worked in a catastrophe before," she said. "Seeing the faces of the children, it became personal, and I could not let go of the faces. I knew going to help there was something I had to do."