

On a journey to help others

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

June 06, 2009 | By Joyce Rudolph

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 Vahe D'Ala and Sevag Vrej in the show "A Journey to Armenia" on Friday at the A&I 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.

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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 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, 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.

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