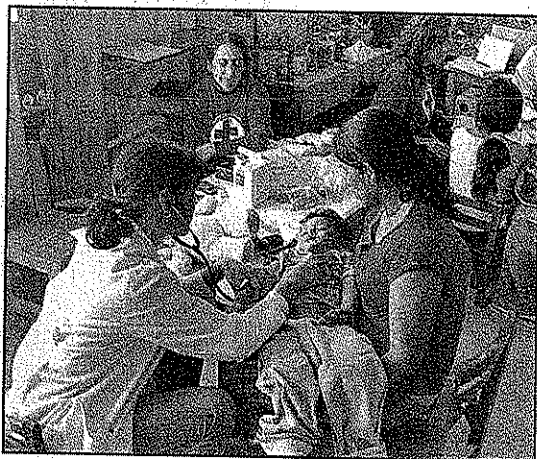


# Our North County



Dr. Sue Ann Park examined a child last month in Peru. A co-worker of the pediatrician, Maria Orozco, also made the trip. Photo courtesy of Dr. Sue Ann Park

## VISTA

### Community clinic doctor helps Peruvian villagers

By Celia Taghdiri

Dr. Sue Ann Park headed off to an exotic locale for a recent vacation, but it wasn't to lounge on the beach or shop in quaint shops.

She and a colleague from the Vista Community Clinic spent their time off last month providing medical care to more than 150 patients in villages of Peru.

Park, 43, of Poway and Maria Orozco, 36, of Vista visited Chil-

ca and Papa Leon in southern Peru, where much of the indigenous population lacks access to health and dental care.

"It was an amazing experience," said Park, the director for pediatrics at the Vista Community Clinic. "The people are so poor in that area, and they live in small lean-tos with flimsy walls and ceilings.

"They are getting into the win-

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### Doctor planning for return visit with a dentist

ter season, so it's cold at night. They do not have any running water, just barrels of water in front of their huts that are filled once a month by a truck that comes by," Park said. "The kids were really dirty but amazingly healthy. We gave out a lot of vitamins, which they really

wanted since nutrition is poor."

She said that as a result of the poor dental health in the villages, "We are hoping to bring a dentist next year."

Park became involved in the effort through her church, Abundant Life Community in the Clairemont area of San Diego. The pastor has been making mission trips to Peru for several years, she said, and wanted to add a medical mission.

He asked Park whether she would like to go on this year's trip. Park, who speaks Spanish, offered to bring another Span-

ish speaker along as well. Park said Orozco, the Vista Community Clinic manager for the pediatric department and a trained medical assistant, was the perfect choice.

The pair brought about \$3,000 in medicine and supplies paid for through garage sales, baby-sitting, individual donations and a golf tournament.

Park and Orozco treated basic illnesses such as colds, ear infections and asthma. She said most children complained of parasites.

"We worked with a local doctor who was overjoyed to receive some assistance with

treating the poor kids in the area," Park said. "It was also a fact-finding tour to assess their needs so that we can make this an annual event."

Vista Community Clinic is a private, nonprofit provider of primary health care and health education. Services include obstetrics, pediatrics, family and internal medicine, dental and preventive services. It operates five clinic sites in Vista and Oceanside. About half of the organization's 52,000 patients are children.

Celia Taghdiri is a freelance writer in Vista.