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Giving is a very selfish act, because it comes back. Whatever I put out, I get back so much more in so many ways.



Driving Forces

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## Spreading the Health

By Sophia Fischer  
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**At a little clinic in Thousand Oaks, doctors and patients alike find a prescription for healing a community**

**O**n a quiet street lined by low-income apartments, behind a busy shopping mall in Thousand Oaks, Calif., something incredible takes place once a week in the neighborhood's shabby church. Transformation.

Thousand Oaks is known as an upscale community, but there are poor, homeless and uninsured residents, including recent immigrants, who are unable to afford a visit to a doctor's office. Yet they will not be ignored. Every Wednesday around 5 p.m., children, adults and the elderly line up outside the Korean New Life Church to receive free, noninvasive care from health professionals in a makeshift clinic.



**As the moon rises over Thousand Oaks, Matilde Gonzales and her baby girl, Lesly Denise, join other locals for a free talk about women's health issues. In another part of the clinic, Dr. Arby Ghazarian (below) and others attend to patients' many needs.**

They come with a variety of ailments, from simple canker sores to serious diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and kidney problems. Inside, volunteer doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, dentists, counselors and social workers prepare for as many as 60 patients, after having seen people all day in their own private practices. Teenage volunteers, dressed in dark blue scrubs, provide support to the physicians, checking patients, creating medical charts, even taking health histories, blood pressure, heart rates and temperatures.

The main room is run-down, warm and stuffy, but the vitality and enthusiasm of the volunteers are transformative. The surroundings almost vibrate with energy. In one corner, a social worker gives a talk on parenting skills in Spanish to a group of men and women. In another corner, a dentist examines a patient. In the center, students sit at long tables taking health histories from patients. In several side rooms, doctors conduct examinations.

One of them is Dr. Steve Kamajian, founder of the grass-roots Westminster Free Clinic, named for the Presbyterian church where he began the program in 1994. Although his eyes are kind and his voice gentle, Kamajian is forceful and stern when talking about issues that necessitate a free clinic such as his. "Health-care problems in the United States are easily solvable if the country approaches it with simple common sense," he says. "So many people are doubly insured. We need to do something where we pool all these resources so that

