Weekend Warrior

April 1, 2002 By Tim Murphy

Here's a guide to kicking AIDS out of Africa

If you have 10 minutes:

- **Get the 411.** Start by clicking on www.aidsandafrica.com for daily updates, a news archive, nation-by-nation stats, message boards, links and more. The top AIDS headlines direct from Africa can be found at www.Allafrica.com.
- **Throw your money around.** There's a constellation of large, well-established relief organizations that will put your bucks to responsible use, from the Nobel Prize-winning Médecins Sans Frontières (www.msf.org) to the biggest kitty of them all, the UN Global Fund (www.unfoundation.org *or call 1.866.AIDSFUND*). Modest donations can really make a difference for cash-strapped grassroots groups like the scrappy Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) in South Africa (www.tac.org.za) and the Health GAP Coalition (www.aids.org/healthgap).

If you have 20 minutes:

- **Be a write-eous babe.** Visit www.senate.gov or www.house.gov for contact info, then write or call (skip the e-mail) your representative or senator. Urge them to sink $2.5 billion a year into the UN Global Fund (it needs $7 to $10 billion a year; our $200 mil is pitiful). Push Congress to allow affordable, quality generic drugs into Africa. And don't sweat the details -- you're paying their salary.
- **Give away your old drugs.** Aid for AIDS collects unused supplies of HIV drugs and antibiotics and distributes them to PWAs in six African countries. Pack up any HIV drugs you're not taking anymore (unless they're expired) and send them to Aid for AIDS/Africa AIDS Program, 515 Greenwich St., Suite 506, New York, NY 10013. (Visit aidforaids.org/ or call 212.337.8043 ext.

24 for info.)

If you have a few hours a week:

- **Fall into the GAP.** The Health GAP Coalition, that is. Whether or not you live near one of its offices in San Francisco, New York City or Philly, you can get active with this national network of folks fighting for global med access and funding. For instance, you can be part of Treatment Access Coalition's campaign to pressure multi-billion-dollar behemoths like Coca-Cola to pay for treatment for their workers in Africa. Health GAP has tips on how to start an affiliate group in your area, and if you're still a young'un, the Student Global AIDS Campaign is an amazing, precociously savvy network of students at nearly 200 U.S. high schools and colleges. (Visit www.globaltreatmentaccess.org or www.stopglobalaids.org.)

If you have six months to a year:

- **Go there.** If you want to go to the front lines, the Harvard of programs is probably Doctors Without Borders, which only takes carefully chosen medical and administrative professionals, usually with humanitarian aid experience, for six-month missions (click "Volunteer" at www.msf.org). Humana People to People and the Denmark-based DRH School Movement cosponsor a program in which you train (there are schools in California and Massachusetts) for a four-to six-month stint doing AIDS relief and education in Southern Africa (www.drh-movement.org). Catholic Relief Services is also picky about its jobs and fellowships, which generally demand a master's degree, a second language and previous overseas aid work, but at least you don't have to be Catholic. (Visit "Employment Opportunities" at www.catholicrelief.org.)

If you have a lifetime:

- **Adopt.** You can share your home, heart and family with one of the estimated 12 million AIDS orphans in Africa. Visit www.africanadoptions.org for info (they prefer that you remain *chez vous* while they bring the child to you).

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