Infectiously Adorable?

April 1, 2010 By James Wortman

Last Christmas, Jennifer Morton, *POZ*'s managing editor, was given HIV by her nephew—in the form of a questionably cute plush toy.

It's one of Drew Oliver's GIANTmicrobes, a line of plush, Petri-dish pals ($7.99, thinkgeek.com) that includes herpes, salmonella, malaria and even H1N1. Why add HIV?

"Our HIV products were produced in response to customer requests and have been very well received by both general consumers and educators who use them as teaching tools," says Laura Sullivan, a GIANTmicrobes spokesperson.

Staff opinions about the toy virus were mixed, but Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr., *POZ*'s deputy editor, eventually warmed up to it. "I hate to admit it, but it's cute," he says. "And, I get to smack HIV around sometimes."

Stress relief anyone?

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