

## ***Rx for Child Survival Connects Local and Global Health in Major Campaign to Promote Survival of World's Neediest Children***

*Launch of Groundbreaking On-air, Online, Print and Community Campaign Pairs International Humanitarian Organizations with National Awareness Partners and Community Coalitions*

*Boston: July 12, 2005* — The WGBH/NOVA Science Unit and Vulcan Productions today launched a far-reaching child survival impact campaign, called *Rx for Child Survival*, created in conjunction with *Rx for Survival—A Global Health Challenge™*, a six-part series airing on PBS, November 1–3, 2005. The series is the cornerstone of an unprecedented national multimedia project to inform Americans about key issues in global health. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and The Merck Company Foundation are funding both the PBS series and the child survival campaign.

*Rx for Child Survival* will raise awareness about the fact that children bear the brunt of the world's global health problems and will offer ways for Americans to give time and voice their own opinions about global health issues. The campaign will also encourage people everywhere to give money to improve the health of the world's neediest children. As part of the kickoff of the *Rx for Child Survival* campaign, the project's Web site, [pbs.org/rxforsurvival](http://pbs.org/rxforsurvival), launched July 7, offering a broad array of human interest and science stories, along with surprising world health facts tools to make a difference in global health, and links to make secure donations to promote child survival.

Paula Apsell, senior executive producer for the WGBH/NOVA Science Unit, explains, "With the power of television to extend our message into 86 million living rooms each week, one of the most visited dot-org Web sites in the world, the local reach of 348 member stations across the U.S., and a far-reaching impact campaign forged on the precept of partnership, PBS is in a unique position to help Americans learn more about the world's most pressing issues and to show them ways to do more to make the world a better place."

"This project addresses not only the past century's public health triumphs, but also the daunting health challenges the world faces today," added Richard Hutton, vice president of media development at Vulcan Productions. "This campaign will help give Americans the power to close the gap between what we know about good health and what we can do about making sure the neediest people in the world have access to basic care."

Experts agree that six million of the children under five who die each year would have a much better chance at life if they had access to simple, inexpensive, basic health interventions. The funds raised for the *Rx for Child Survival* campaign will be used to deliver five of those life-saving interventions to the world's neediest

children to dramatically increase their chances of survival. The children will have access to:

- Vaccinations to fight childhood diseases, including measles and tetanus
- Insecticide-treated netting to stop mosquitoes that carry malaria
- Vitamin A and other micronutrients to help fight infection and prevent nutritional deficiencies
- Oral rehydration packets to help reduce diarrhea-related illness and deaths
- Antibiotics to fight pneumonia and antimalarial drugs

Additionally, where it is appropriate, pregnant women and new mothers will be educated about the health value of breastfeeding their infants.

To broaden the project's effectiveness and reach, the campaign extends far beyond television's boundaries and includes partnerships with some of the world's most respected humanitarian, professional and community organizations. CARE and Save the Children, two of the world's most respected aid organizations have joined *Rx for Child Survival* as **International Fulfillment Partners** to use campaign donations to deliver to children the five basic health interventions they need to survive to age five. The fulfillment partners will deliver the interventions to children in Afghanistan, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone and Vietnam. Save the Children and CARE have existing infrastructure, education and local support in these countries. Eighty-eight percent of all funds raised will be used to deliver these interventions to make a difference in the lives of children at risk.

*Rx for Child Survival* has two **National Mobilization Partners** who will encourage Americans to act to improve the world's health. The Global Health Council, the world's largest membership alliance dedicated to saving lives by improving health throughout the world, will provide ways for viewers and Web users to let their voices be heard within their communities and among government leaders. And UNICEF, a world leader in protecting children, will receive a portion of *Rx for Child Survival* funds with which to buy vaccines. UNICEF will also help spread the word about the project through their Halloween Trick or Treat boxes, which will carry a reminder to Americans to learn more about international health efforts by watching PBS' *Rx for Survival* series beginning November 1.

In addition, a number of humanitarian, professional and community partners will be central to awareness raising by creating activities for and sharing information with their members and constituencies and reaching Americans through their existing activities. These **Outreach Partners** are: American Academy of Pediatrics; American Public Health Association; The CORE Group; Girl Scouts of the USA; Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI); National Public Health Information Coalition; the Pan American Health Organization; Rotary International; The United Nations Association–USA; and U.S. Coalition for Child Survival.

Finally, as the driving force of the grassroots outreach, PBS stations from Seattle to Atlanta have stepped forward to serve as hubs for 20 **Community Coalitions** and as models for galvanizing Americans' awareness and engagement in global health and child survival. Anchored by the stations, the Community Coalitions will include partnerships with local branches of the 10 national Outreach Partners and with a variety of community organizations, hospitals, civic groups, universities, businesses, faith organizations and others within their communities. From the end of summer and well into 2006, the Coalitions will organize a host of activities from screenings and panel discussions to child survival fundraisers and local public affairs programming.

The Coalition stations are: GPB, Atlanta; KCTS, Seattle; KMOS, Warrensburg, MO; KPBS, San Diego; KUHT, Houston; KVIE, Sacramento; KWBU, Waco; MPT, Owings Mills, MD; NET, Lincoln, NE; TPT, St. Paul/Minneapolis; VPT, Colchester, VT; WGBH, Boston; WGBY, Springfield, MA; WGVU, Grand Rapids; WLPB, Baton Rouge; WNET, NY; WNPT, Nashville; WTCL, Chattanooga; WTVI, Charlotte; and WIPR, Puerto Rico.

*Rx for Child Survival* will be supported by a broad array of awareness-raising and mobilization tools including online communications, toolkits for community screenings and events, a newsroom guide to help reporters understand the complexities and local relevance of global health stories, and a number of local and national events.

*Rx for Child Survival* has been created by the WGBH/NOVA Science Unit and Vulcan Productions in conjunction with their *Rx for Survival* multimedia project. Anchored by a compelling six-hour PBS television series, narrated by Brad Pitt and premiering November 1-3, 2005, *Rx for Survival—A Global Health Challenge* will encompass a wealth of companion elements from major media and educational partners including TIME Magazine, NPR, The Penguin Press and Johns Hopkins University. Together these many pieces will combine to turn Americans' attention to global health in late October and early November and make *Rx for Survival* the most comprehensive global health media education project ever mounted.

### **WGBH/NOVA Science Unit**

WGBH Boston is America's preeminent public broadcasting producer, the source of fully one-third of PBS's prime-time lineup, along with some of public television's best-known lifestyle and children's programs and many public radio favorites. One of its premiere programs, NOVA, is a production of the WGBH/NOVA Science Unit. Now in its 31st year of broadcasting, NOVA is the most popular science series on American television and is seen in more than 100 countries. It is also one of television's most acclaimed series, having won every major television award, most of them many times over. NOVA's programs are used extensively in classrooms around the country and the NOVA website is

consistently the most trafficked on pbs.org. In 1998, the National Science Board of the National Science Foundation awarded NOVA its first-ever Public Service Award. NOVA has won every major broadcasting award, including the Emmy, the Peabody, the AAAS Westinghouse Science Journalism Award, and the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Gold Baton. For more information on WGBH and NOVA, respectively, visit <http://www.wgbh.org/> and <http://www.pbs.org/nova>.

### **Vulcan Productions**

Vulcan Productions is the independent film production company founded by investor and philanthropist Paul G. Allen in 1997. Vulcan Productions devotes itself exclusively to producing independent films of unique vision and artistic quality. With feature film projects such as *Hard Candy*, *Far From Heaven*, *The Safety of Objects*, and award-winning documentaries such as Martin Scorsese's *The Blues*, *Evolution*, *Black Sky: The Race for Space* and *Black Sky: Winning The X-Prize*, the company commits its talent and resources to creating films of substance and enduring significance. Through its collaborative partnerships with established and emerging filmmakers, Vulcan Productions explores creative opportunities that result in engaging and inspirational storytelling. Visit Vulcan Productions online at <http://www.vulcanproductions.com/>.

### **The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (<http://www.gatesfoundation.org>) works to promote greater equity in four areas: global health, education, public libraries, and support for at-risk families in Washington state and Oregon in the US. The Seattle-based foundation joins local, national and international partners to ensure that advances in these areas reach those who need them most.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Health program is dedicated to improving the health of people in the developing world. The foundation focuses on the health problems that cause the greatest burden in the developing world, but receive relatively little attention and resources—diseases like HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, vaccine-preventable diseases, diarrhea, and respiratory infections. The foundation's global health grantmaking supports two primary approaches to improving health: research to develop new tools like vaccines, drugs and diagnostics; and strategies to accelerate access to the health solutions that already exist.

### **The Merck Company Foundation**

The Merck Company Foundation is a U.S.-based private charitable foundation established in 1957 by Merck & Co., Inc., a global research-driven pharmaceutical company dedicated to putting patients first. Established in 1891, Merck discovers, develops, manufactures and markets vaccines and medicines in more than 20 therapeutic categories.

The Merck Company Foundation is funded entirely by the Company and is Merck's chief source of funding support to qualified non-profit charitable organizations. The mission of

the Foundation is to support organizations and innovative programs in the United States and around the world that: expand access to medicines, vaccines and quality health care; build capacity in the biomedical and health sciences; promote environments that encourage innovation, economic growth and development in a fair and ethical context; and support communities where Merck has a major presence. Since its inception, The Merck Company Foundation has supported initiatives that address societal needs and are consistent with Merck's overall mission to enhance the health and wellbeing of people around the world. For more information on Merck and The Merck Company Foundation, visit [www.merck.com](http://www.merck.com).