



Premieres April 12, 2006
(check local listings)

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Rx for Survival™—The Heroes Follows Real-Life Heroes Who Make the World a Healthier Place

Brad Pitt Narrates a Special Edition of the Acclaimed Rx for Survival Series
Premiering April 12 at 9p.m. on PBS (check local listings)

An eye doctor from Baltimore discovers that two drops of Vitamin A could not only save children's sight, it might also save their lives. Motorcycle enthusiasts turn their passion into unique transportation for health workers, enabling vital care to reach people in remote areas. A young businessman managing a landmark HIV/AIDS program in Botswana proves AIDS can be treated and contained. Community volunteers spread health education to millions of rural mothers, empowering them to lead their families and Bangladesh out of extreme poverty. These are just a few of the inspiring stories about global health successes viewers will see on *Rx for Survival™—The Heroes*.

Rx for Survival—The Heroes, premiering April 12, 2006 at 9p.m. on PBS (check local listings), features extraordinary individuals who battle dangerous diseases and inspire actions that save lives. As models of courage, commitment and ingenuity, these men and women work tirelessly to find solutions to global health crises. Narrated by Brad Pitt and produced by the WGBH/NOVA Science Unit and Vulcan Productions, this unique two-hour program presents moving stories from the acclaimed *Rx for Survival—A Global Health Challenge™* series that aired in November 2005.

“*Rx for Survival—The Heroes* reveals the real-life, get-it-done heroism that happens everyday on the frontlines of global health,” said Larry Klein, executive producer of *Rx for Survival*. “These remarkable individuals overcome immense obstacles and by doing so, send a message that poverty and ill-health is not inevitable, and real change is indeed possible.”

Rx for Survival—The Heroes explores the greatest challenges in global health and relates them to the dramatic stories of unsung champions and the people they strive to protect. This program takes viewers inside the stirring campaigns that have given renewed faith to poor communities around the world.

(more)

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pbs.org/rxforsurvival

In today's globalized society, where infectious diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis still exist and new ones emerge with regularity, access to proven treatment and prevention methods can mean the difference between life and death. Stories of *Rx for Survival—The Heroes* include:

- In Nepal, Dr. Alfred Sommer proves a two-cent vitamin A capsule taken twice a year dramatically reduces child mortality, and Ram Shrestha leads an army of 49,000 grandmothers to distribute the capsules to 3.5 million children in just 2 days.
- In rural Africa, Andrea and Barry Coleman deliver sidecar-equipped motorcycles—that are used as mini-ambulances—and train healthcare workers to ride them.
- In Botswana, Dr. Ernest Darkoh launches one of Africa's most successful AIDS treatment programs and begins redefining the way African nations fight AIDS.
- In India, one of polio's last strongholds, Dr. Sudeep Singh and Naysan Sahba are on a mission to vaccinate every child under five—all 165 million of them—to end polio there forever.
- In Uganda, UNICEF's Kiwe Sebunya delivers clean water, which means good health and increased commerce for rural villages throughout the country.
- In Peru, Dr. Jim Kim and Dr. Paul Farmer stop a deadly strain of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis from killing the people there and spreading worldwide.
- In Togo, Dr. Uche Amazigo helps affected villages end the vicious cycle of river blindness—a parasitic disease that has devastated this region for decades.
- In Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee or "BRAC" has become a model for health care in the developing world. Led by a charismatic founder and cadres of local women, BRAC is saving lives and helping Bangladesh alleviate poverty and despair.

To encourage others to become global health heroes, the WGBH Educational Foundation and Vulcan Productions have created *Rx for Child Survival*, a campaign that is raising public awareness and participation in a worldwide effort to prevent needless child deaths. With millions of children dying from preventable diseases every year, child survival is one global health challenge about which everyone can quickly and easily make a positive difference.

In collaboration with Save the Children, CARE, UNICEF and the Global Health Council, *Rx for Child Survival* offers simple ways to ensure the world's most vulnerable children receive the critical health interventions they need to better their chances of survival in developing countries. By speaking out, volunteering time, spreading the word, or donating money, everyone can be a champion for global health. To get involved, visit the *Rx for Child Survival* Web site at www.pbs.org/rxforsurvival/campaign.

Rx for Survival—A Global Health Challenge is a six-part PBS documentary series that was the center of an unprecedented global health media and education project in November 2005. The *Rx for Survival* project assembled independent media coverage from PBS.org, TIME magazine, NPR and The Penguin Press, and was extended by *Rx for Child Survival*, a far-reaching outreach campaign focusing on improving the health and survival of the world's children. Major funding for *Rx for Survival* is provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Merck Company Foundation. *Rx for Survival* is produced in association with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Additional funding for *Rx for Survival—The Heroes* is provided by public television viewers.

PBS is a private, nonprofit media enterprise that serves the nation's 348 public noncommercial television stations, reaching nearly 90 million people each week through on-air and online content. Bringing diverse viewpoints to television and the Internet, PBS provides high-quality documentary and dramatic entertainment, and consistently dominates the most prestigious award competitions. PBS is the leading provider of educational materials for K-12 teachers, and offers a broad array of educational services for adult learners. PBS' premier kids' TV programming and Web site, PBS KIDS Online pbskids.org, continue to be parents' and teachers' most trusted learning environments for children. More information about PBS is available at pbs.org, one of the leading dot-org Web sites on the Internet.

WGBH's NOVA Science Unit, headed by Paula S. Apsell, has won every major broadcasting award. NOVA, now in its 33rd season, is one of the most watched series on PBS and is seen in more than 100 countries. NOVA's programs are used extensively in classrooms around the country and the NOVA Web site is consistently the most trafficked on PBS.

WGBH Boston is America's preeminent public broadcasting producer, the source of fully one-third of PBS' prime-time lineup, along with some of public television's best-known lifestyle shows and children's programs and many public radio favorites. WGBH is the number one producer of Web sites on pbs.org, one of the most trafficked dot-org Web sites in the world. WGBH is a pioneer in educational multimedia and in technologies and services that make media accessible to the 36 million Americans who rely on captioning or video descriptions. WGBH has been recognized with hundreds of honors: Emmys, Peabodys, duPont-Columbia Awards...even two Oscars. In 2002, WGBH was honored with a special institutional Peabody Award for 50 years of excellence. For more information visit www.wgbh.org.

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 www.vulcanproductions.com.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (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 United States. 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 is a United States-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 to address unmet medical needs. The Company devotes extensive efforts to increase access to medicines through far-reaching programs that not only donate Merck medicines but deliver them to the people who need them. Merck also publishes unbiased health information as a not-for-profit service.

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 well-being of people around the world. For more information on Merck and The Merck Company Foundation, visit merck.com.