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HARAMBEE Night in Canada – African-themed “Party with a Purpose” fuels Canadian physician’s dream for community initiative to fight HIV Pandemic

*Dr. Jane Philpott, founder of **Give a Day**, amazed at growth of Canadian grassroots movement as Harambee parties planned in offices, schools and homes across country*

Toronto, ONTARIO – (October 26, 2008) — Canadians across the country are embracing the Harambee — a popular community-building event in several African countries — as a fun and innovative way to hold a “party with a purpose” in raising awareness and donations to help African people hardest hit by the lingering effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The concept is part of the **Give a Day** (GAD) campaign, a grassroots movement founded in 2004 by Canadian physician Dr. Jane Philpott, who created the simple concept of asking people to give a day’s pay after working for a decade in African communities coping with HIV/AIDS. There are over 5000 AIDS-related deaths in the world every day. Three-quarters of those deaths are in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The **Give a Day** concept quickly caught on in the medical community, with everyone from residents to neurosurgeons supporting the cause, and has since spread through major law firms across Canada. With schools and other businesses joining the cause, GAD has raised more than \$2 million since inception. Focused on community-to-community giving, the Harambee concept gathers people together to educate and raise funds to solve a problem at a local level.

“A Harambee can be held anywhere,” says Dr. Philpott, the Chief of Family Medicine at Markham Stouffville Hospital in Markham, Ontario. “It’s about people gathering together, talking and listening to great African music while they share and learn about what they can do to be part of the solution to HIV/AIDS in Africa. It’s not a somber event – but an opportunity to come together to do some good at home, school or in the office.”

This year, several Canadian artists have donated music for a GAD Harambee CD that will be released in early November. The CD will be available as part of an easy 6-step “Host a Harambee” kit available at www.giveaday.ca. GAD recommends donations to two renowned frontline organizations — the [Stephen Lewis Foundation](#) (SLF) and [Dignitas International](#)—that provide medication, services and support to people at the community level in Africa.

Stephen Lewis, head of SLF says, “It’s important to recognize that one day’s pay can cover a gambit of needs in Africa. One day’s pay, or even a modest amount, can cover school fees for an entire semester for a group of kids or provide meals for a child whose parent is living with HIV for an entire year. Give a Day donations go straight to individual children and families.”

Dr. James Orbinski, co-founder of Dignitas International, adds, "Giving a day's pay can have a huge impact on the effectiveness of an organization like Dignitas to do what it is that it seeks to do, which is to deliver community-based care for people living with HIV in the developing world. I strongly encourage you to come together to learn as much as you can about the AIDS pandemic and to learn what you can do to make yourself part of what is now a global health solution to a global health problem."

"Give a Day to World AIDS is a simple yet powerful way to make a difference in the fight against the AIDS pandemic," says Dr. Philpott. "Be a part of the solution. On December 1, please give a day."

For more information or to donate a day's pay, visit www.giveaday.ca.

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For further information:

Karla Goldstein
MAVERICK PR
karlag@maverickpr.com
416-640-5525 x 231

Julie Weiss, Coordinator
Give a Day to World AIDS
coordinator@giveaday.ca
(416) 938-0524