



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**BAY AREA CELEBRITY TO SHARE TALENT AT
BENEFIT FOR THE
GLOBAL AIDS INTERFAITH ALLIANCE (GAIA)**

*Author Anne Lamott speaks
Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Maria Shriver are Honorary Chairs*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (December 1, 2008) -- Author Anne Lamott will speak at a spring benefit for the Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance in the gardens of Woodside supporters on Sunday, May, 3, 2009(4-7PM). Nobel Peace Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu is Honorary Chair; Maria Shriver, First Lady of California, is Honorary Co-Chair.

"I know a lot of us feel a lot of hopelessness and powerlessness" said Lamott about the AIDS pandemic. "GAIA is one place where there are small daily miracles... That is what Bill and GAIA are doing -- taking the breath and spirit of caring attention to people who were scared to death, and now they are not."

The Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance (www.thegaia.org) partners with local leaders and organizations in the Central African country of Malawi to feed, clothe, and educate AIDS orphans; empower village women; provide HIV testing; and train in HIV prevention. All proceeds from the benefit will support GAIA's work in the villages of Malawi, a country of nearly 13 million where about 14% of the adult population is infected with HIV/AIDS and over 550,000 children have been orphaned by AIDS (*Source: UNAIDS*).

"We're extremely excited and honored to have the support of Archbishop Tutu and many others" said GAIA President The Rev. William Rankin. "We hope that this event will raise both awareness and funds for HIV prevention and care in a desperately poor country."



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About the Presenters and Sponsors

Anne Lamott is the best-selling author of *Bird by Bird*, *Operating Instructions*, *Traveling Mercies* and more, and is known for her deep yet hilarious commentaries on life.

Since the end of apartheid, Archbishop Tutu has been a leader in battling the AIDS pandemic in Africa and an outspoken advocate for HIV prevention and treatment. He has served as honorary chair of GAIA events over the last three years. With a long career in journalism, Maria Shriver has served as a reporter, correspondent, and anchor and authored five books. Her husband, Arnold Schwarzenegger, is governor of California.

About GAIA

The Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance, a non-profit organization based in San Francisco, was founded in 2000 in response to the global HIV/AIDS catastrophe. Driven by the desire to stop this devastating disease, William Rankin, an Episcopal priest and GAIA's president and chief executive officer, and Charles Wilson, GAIA's former board chair and Professor of Neurosurgery, Emeritus, UCSF, focused on using the religious networks in Africa to prevent the spread of the disease in developing countries. GAIA currently works in Malawi villages, rural hospitals, and nursing schools to prevent the spread of AIDS through education, empowerment to women and families, voluntary testing for HIV, clothing, food, school supplies, and care to orphans and the dangerously ill. In addition to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Elizabeth Taylor HIV/AIDS Foundation, the organization is supported by more than 50 U.S. religious congregations and numerous individual donors. For more information or to learn how you can help, please visit www.thegaia.org.

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In Malawi...

\$50 feeds and clothes and orphan for one year
\$100 pays for yearly secondary school fees for an orphaned child
\$500 employs a village woman to be a caregiver
\$1,000 buys five bicycle ambulances for transporting patients
\$5,000 supports a project providing food, life skills training, and care to 270 people living with HIV/AIDS for a year