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CURRENT TOTAL RAISED FOR IAVI: \$4904.07 USD

Pitzer College

As I imagine you now know, in a matter of months I will be embarking on a 2,650 mile trip from Mexico to Canada via the Pacific Crest Trail. Since I first began telling people of this trip several years ago, occasionally I have been asked about my motivation. Generally, I have answered that it has always been something that I have wanted to do, but those people got me wondering if I could do the trail for a cause. In answer to that question, I put my mind to work thinking about how best to undertake a fundraiser, and for what cause.

After much research, I have come to the conclusion that HIV/AIDS is increasingly becoming the worst pandemic in Earth's history. As of now, approximately 39.4 million people are living with AIDS, 65% of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa. In some countries, such as Botswana, more than one third of their population has HIV/AIDS to such a point that their population is actually eroding. What I am proposing to do is walk for research.

I have done some research on the subject of donations, and the best place I have found to give money is the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI). I make no claims that my charity is better than yours, but from what I have discovered, this one runs extremely efficiently with approximately 90.4% of money going directly to their programs. Their rather well-worded mission statement reads:

The International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) is a global organization working to speed the development and distribution of preventive AIDS vaccines, the world's best hope for ending the AIDS epidemic. IAVI's work focuses on four areas: mobilizing support through advocacy and education; accelerating scientific progress; encouraging industrial participation in AIDS vaccine development; and assuring global access. The global AIDS burden is deepening the rift between the world's rich and poor, a trend that will persist unless and until an affordable vaccine is available around the world. IAVI was born out of the recognition that the best long-term solution to the growing AIDS epidemic is a vaccine.

For more information on this organization, their website is www.iavi.org, and some condensed information on them can be found at www.charitynavigator.org.

It is my goal to raise at least \$5,000 to give to this cause. I am still working with IAVI on figuring out the details of donating money, but the plan is to create a pledge per mile system by which for each mile I hike, donors give a certain quantity of money from as low as a penny to as much as you like. If you are interested in donating to this cause on a per mile basis, I have a site dedicated to this cause, www.aidshike.org, and you may email me at mlissner@aidshike.org to make a pledge. Donations will be tax deductible, and will work to remedy the biggest problem on Earth. Please feel free to distribute this message in any reasonable form you see fit.

December 1 was [World AIDS Day 2004](#). I encourage you to learn whatever you can.

Sincerely,
Michael Lissner '04