

Bay Area medical team goes to Ethiopia

By Manha Ginsburg
Examiner staff writer

Three years ago, she dispatched doctors and nurses to famine-stricken Somalia. With 120 locally trained community workers and 80 health attendants now in place there, Maria Eitz is embarking on a new project to combat illness.

Today, she and a public health nurse were to board a plane to join her 15-member Medical Volunteers International team at starving Ethiopia's border with Sudan.

Accompanied by bags full of antibiotics and reusable syringes, the founder of the Bay Area relief agency hopes to help ease the 80 percent infant mortality rate in areas near the border.

"My people from the field are crying for more nurses, more food, more doctors, more everything," said Eitz, 43. "The daily situation is getting more terrible."

Her workers, who have been there for nine months, say refugees devastated by drought and the civil war in Ethiopia at the northern tip of Ethiopia are entering the Sudan at a rate of 200 a day, up from 60 a month three months ago.

They are bringing illness with them, she said. The 100-kilometer-long border where her group plans to set up feeding and medical stations has received minimal help from the U.S. government because of Ethiopia's civil war.

"The U.S. is staying out of it," she said. "They're not providing enough medicine on her side to try to provide for 100,000 mothers and children. That's 17,000 aspirin, 25,000 penicillin tablets, 100 vials of ampicillin and



VOLUNTEER MARIA EITZ
Crying for... everything

25,000 iron tablets.

The group will also provide tuberculosis screening and measles vaccines.

Eitz said Ethiopia has had no rain in 10 years. Refugees from the border from near the Red Sea into the Sudan's Tigray Valley, which has had no rain but has an underground river that is accessible.

"The people look like broken pottery — millions of pieces of broken pottery. Children think it's sweet because they are so hungry, but we know it causes severe cramps," Eitz said.

These people are the poorest of the poor. They have no water, no help, no food, no medicine. So they interplay and the death rate is high. We want to set up a program where people can maintain themselves, like we did in Somalia.

She said the Swedish Red Cross is also sending aid.

Eitz said she and other relief agencies will meet in Khartoum with Sudanese government officials and the United Nations High Commission on Nov. 28. They will discuss how to alleviate the situation, she said.

'Santa U' to train this year's contract clauses

By Don Martinez
Examiner staff writer

OAKLAND — So you've always wanted to be a Santa.

An opportunity will make itself available to you on Wednesday, and all other potential Kra Kringle's, to put your money where your beard is figuratively.

That's when Western Temporary Services will open the doors to its free University of Santa.

The seasonal semester, which runs from 10 a.m. to noon at 1736 Franklin St. in Oakland, will cover all the do's and don'ts of Santahood.

Things like never saying "Ho, ho, ho" because the traditional greeting has been known to give 3-year-olds heart failure.

There will be a snap quiz on the names of Santa's six reindeer... or... it might.

Candidates for the job — 3,000 will be recruited and trained by the employment agency throughout the nation in the coming weeks to stand in until Dec. 25 rolls around — will also

be clad in the secret pocket found in every Santa suit — just the place to tuck a flask of medicine to maintain a rest and cheery nose.

Applicants for a Santa assignment should be aware that the competition is stiff, according to Western spokesperson Santa Samelson.

"Only about one out of 35 candidates are actually chosen to be a Santa's helper," she said.

So what are the qualifications for the job?

"Having twinkly eyes helps," she said, explaining that instructors at the Santa school teach people "how to make their eyes twinkle."

It's also important to have a deep resonant voice.

This doesn't necessarily shut out female applicants, according to Samelson.

"We really don't think of Santa as male or female," she said. "It's just important to be easygoing, cheerful, have an understanding of children and parents... they deal a lot with parents."

Further, skinny people can apply.

"We never ask anybody to put on weight for the job," Samelson continued. "We supply pillows."

Applicants come from all walks of life.

"Our Santas have been college students, retired senior citizens, housewives, professional types like lawyers and certified public accountants... just everybody who has the Christmas spirit," Samelson said.

Western is the largest supplier of Santas in the country. They've been doing it since 1960.

It is also the only outfit that requires formal training for the job, which pays about \$5 an hour at most department stores.

Like every other industry, the Santa business has had its ups and downs over the years.

The last couple of holiday seasons have seen a decrease in demand because some store managers, eager to sell everything and anything they could, used the space usually reserved for Santa to display still more goods.

This attitude has been enough to create the wrinkled brow of Samelson himself.

Western supplied up to 300 Santas in the Bay Area last year.

This was down from about 500 Santas five years ago.

A major reason for the decrease, according to Samelson, is that "instead of each store having its own individual Santa, shopping malls have furnished one Santa to cover several stores in the vicinity."

However, things are looking up this year.

"We have received many more requests this year for our Santa service, compared with last year at this time," she said, explaining that the actual number of jobs is not yet known because "the phones are still ringing."

Further, the demand for Santa is on the increase throughout Australia and Britain, where Western also has offices.

Samelson urged those interested in participating in the annual school to call the Western office at 404-1154.

Baby Fae's rejection 'episode' is controlled

LOMA LINDA (UPI) — Baby Fae's immune system tried to reject the transplanted baboon heart that is keeping her alive, but her doctors said she responded well to medication and the rejection was controlled.

The 4-week-old infant, who received the animal heart in a historic transplant operation Oct. 26, underwent a "rejection episode" last week that was not revealed until yesterday.

"We have diagnosed an episode of rejection," said Dr. Robin Doroshov, a pediatrician at Loma Linda Medical Center, on the television news show "Live the Nation."

It is not critical. Her clinical condition appears normal," Doroshov said.

Hospital spokeswoman said the baby was diagnosed yesterday morning showing a favorable response to anti-rejection treatment and no signs of rejection.

Doctors feel the baby continues to do well clinically in spite of the rejection episode, the spokeswoman said. "She feeds, grasps at bottles, cries when she's hungry and has a normal heart function."

Doctors have said several times they expect the baby's immune sys-

tem to try to reject the transplanted organ.

In adult transplants, doctors do periodic biopsies — taking tiny samples of tissue — from the heart to see if the body's immune system is attacking it. But because the baboon's heart is only the size of a walnut, that method cannot be used.

Instead, doctors use non-invasive means such as an electrocardiograph, X-rays and blood tests to determine if a rejection is occurring.

The hospital also said yesterday that Baby Fae showed no sign of infection, which they fear because the anti-rejection drugs reduce her ability to fight infection.

Doroshov said the hospital has been authorized to perform another baboon heart transplant on Baby Fae and has also registered with an organ procurement agency for a human baby heart in case she rejects the baboon organ.

"If she has a rejection to the point we cannot control, we would consider another transplant," Doroshov said. "She is registered for a human heart. Another baboon heart could also be considered at that time."

For her, this housing project is the closest thing to heaven

From Page B1

... shelves. Behind the glass of a... was a large, gold glass... that commemorated Ananda... 15th wedding anniversary... verbal speck of dust was no... where to be found.

"I was raised this way," said Boyson... that even if your choice is... they have to be clean."

She apologized for a pass of small... but starter plants scattered... around the room. "I'm babysitting for a... she went to Europe."

Several times a day Boyson walks... the hall, walk hallways of Merry Ter... a little exercise. If a day is... pretty, she's out among... the boy sidewalks of Fell... Street.

"I love it. I just love that Fell... Street," she said with a giggle.

Although she understands why... people sit in their rooms and... the windows, Boyson doesn't... any such behavior.

"So much of feeling good I tell you... on "yesterday," she said, looking intently through her wire... and back-crimped glasses. "If you mix... the world, you'll see. You can't just... them in the hall and don't say... anything."

Sometimes, when I walk here, I... expect morning," and they say, "We... don't speak English. They could... something else. But I don't care. I... Well, OK, good morning. I... keep on doing it."

Each day begins, said Boyson,

when "I read my prayers. Even if the... phone rings, I don't answer. I don't... want to be disturbed."

Based as a Lutheran, she said she... regrets she cannot get out to church... often enough, "but I don't mind going... upstairs to the Mass. I mean, there's... only one God, huh?"

She told of receiving letters from... Germany during World War II with... the news that family members had... been killed. Of losing Fred to heart... disease three years ago. Of having... just a "little stroke" of her own 10... years ago. Her strong voice was tinged... by sadness, but galvanized by an ap... parent, Helmut Robinson.

"When I was a little girl, my broth... er was killed in an accident," she said. "I was maybe 9. My mother was preg... nant and couldn't go to the funeral. I... went. I remember the minister saying... of my brother. He has no more... worries. He has his peace. But you... you have to keep going." I always re... member that."

Boyson's sad stories were few. She... laughed often and said she was grate... ful for so many friends outside Merry... Terrace who visit and take her out to... hear music or lectures. Like the girl... with too many dates for the program, she... even has to decide who gets her com... pany this Thanksgiving Day.

After an hour of interrogation by a... stranger, Boyson was thanked for her... impromptu hospitality. Her visitor... apologized for staying so long.

"Ah, no, no," she said, walking... slowly but steadily to the elevator... bank. "I got all the time in the world."



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