

# REMEDY

PRESCRIPTIONS FOR A HEALTHY LIFE

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2000 \$3

## The Best Gift Of All HEALTH

AMERICAN  
ASSOCIATION

Put your money  
where your heart is:  
Give donations  
as presents—  
no shopping needed!

19 TOP-RATED  
HEALTH CHARITIES

TO:  
AMERICAN RED CROSS  
FROM:  
MEE

TO:  
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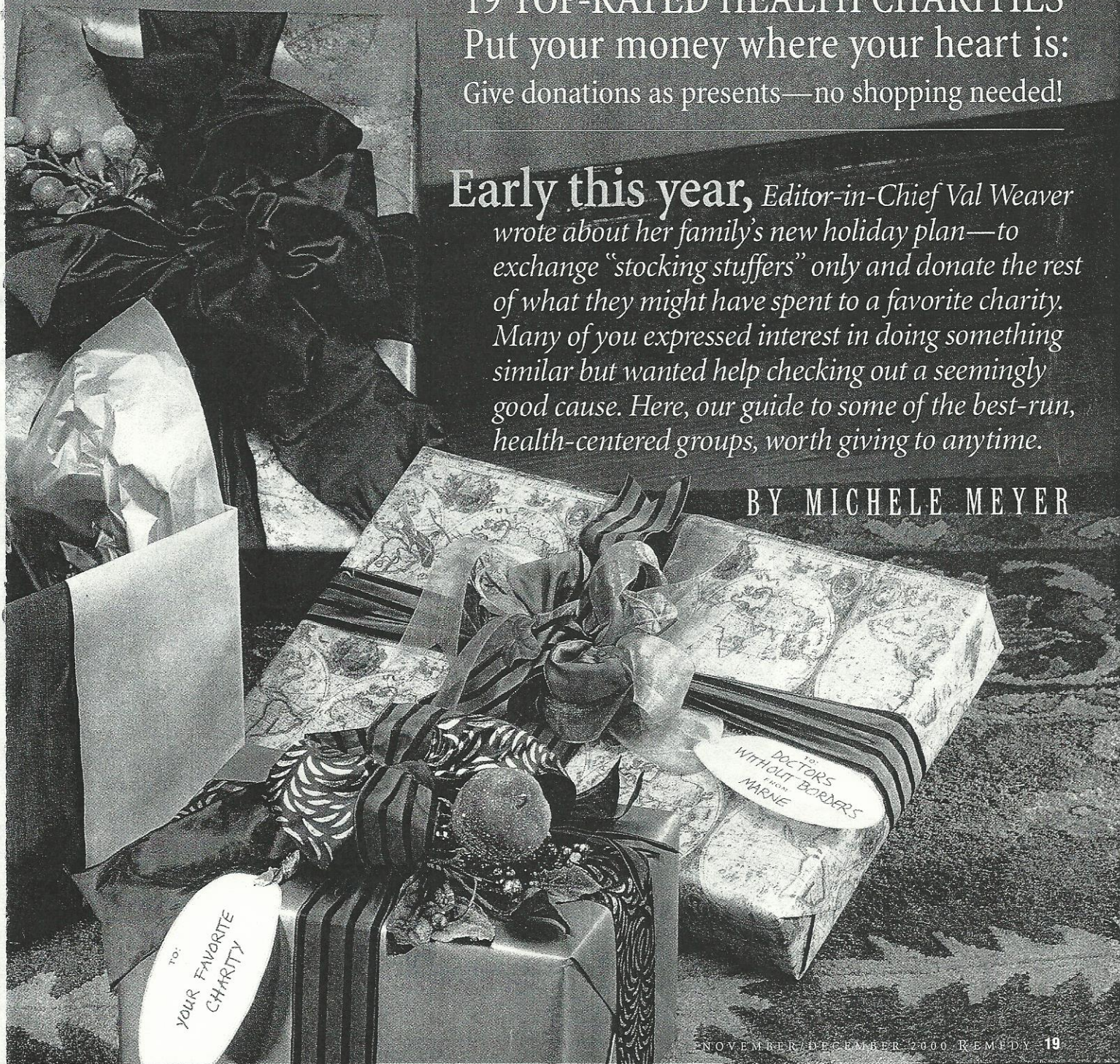


# Gift of HEALTH

19 TOP-RATED HEALTH CHARITIES  
Put your money where your heart is:  
Give donations as presents—no shopping needed!

**Early this year,** *Editor-in-Chief Val Weaver wrote about her family's new holiday plan—to exchange “stocking stuffers” only and donate the rest of what they might have spent to a favorite charity. Many of you expressed interest in doing something similar but wanted help checking out a seemingly good cause. Here, our guide to some of the best-run, health-centered groups, worth giving to anytime.*

BY MICHELE MEYER



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2000 REMEDY 19



**D**onating to a charity in the name of a loved friend or family member sounds simple—until you realize that more than 715,000 groups are vying for your funds. Individuals gave a total of \$144 billion last year—76 percent of all the money that charities collect.



But even dedicated donators often don't know where their dollars will do the most good—and everyone worries about falling for dubious pitches.

That's why we've culled the best of the best health-centered charities. How? By cross-comparing three monitors of the charity world to see which health groups turned up at the top of everyone's list. Our watchdogs: the Council of Better Business Bureau's Philanthropic Advisory Service (BBB), the American

Institute of Philanthropy (AIP) and the National Charities Information Bureau (NCIB). See their rigorous criteria, below.

To make the top group, a charity had to survive a check by all three groups—including getting at least an A- from AIP, which actually gives out grades. In addition,

we've listed 15 other health organizations that also scored well but got less than an A- from AIP and/or weren't reviewed by all three raters.

If your favorite charity isn't here, don't write it off. There are many, many terrific groups that don't appear because they're too local to be reviewed by our monitors or they're not health focused—which was one of our criteria. To check out a charity that we haven't covered, see page 26. Happy giving! →

## Our Watchdog Groups

**OUR THREE** charity watchdogs have slightly different criteria but share some key requirements: Charities must be 1) independently audited; 2) willing to open their financial records to interested donors; and 3) accountable to a governing body (like a board of directors). In addition, we included only organizations defined as true charities by the IRS—meaning monetary donations are fully tax-deductible. Who's who:

• **The Council of Better Business Bureau's Philanthropic Advisory Service** Every quarter, this BBB division reviews the 200 groups that are the "most asked about." To pass muster, an organization must spend at least 50 percent of total income on its cause (vs. on administration, mailings, etc.) and show in writing what the funds have accomplished. No more than 35 percent of contributions should be spent on fundraising, which should not be misleading

or high-pressure. The governing body must meet at least three times yearly. *CBBB Philanthropic Advisory Service, 4200 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 800, Arlington, VA 22203; 703-276-0100; [www.bbb.org/about/pas.asp](http://www.bbb.org/about/pas.asp)*

• **The American Institute of Philanthropy (AIP)** This is the only group that actually hands out grades, from A+ to F. To "pass," charities must funnel 60 percent or more of their total spending into their mission. Also, they must 1) *use* (vs. stockpile) the money that they raise within three years; 2) clearly state their mission and accomplishments; and 3) avoid excessive telemarketing or cost-inefficient solicitations (such as greeting cards and address labels). *AIP, 4905 Del Ray Ave., Ste. 300, Bethesda, MD 20814; 301-913-5200; [www.charitywatch.org](http://www.charitywatch.org). REMEDY readers can get AIP's "Charity Rating Guide" free.*

• **National Charities Information Bureau (NCIB)** This organization focuses primarily on 400 cancer charities, relief agencies and environmental groups that tend to have broad national appeal in terms of donors. Its standards: At least 60 percent of a charity's expenses must go to meeting its promises. An independent board of directors should meet at least twice yearly. There shouldn't be a persistent deficit or a reserve more than twice the yearly budget.

Groups that pass muster are rated as "meeting all standards." Some results are pending, while a "report is being updated." But other groups may be marked "do not meet standards" or "requests for information unanswered." *The NCIB recently announced plans to merge with the BBB's charity division. The new group will be located in the BBB's Virginia offices; please use that contact info (center top).*



# Top 4 Health Charities



## American Red Cross

**WHAT IT DOES:** Trains collide. A tornado wipes out a town. Wild fires force residents to flee their homes. Who shows up with food, pints of blood, money to rebuild and vouchers for clothes and household items? The Red Cross, the nation's #5 charity, according to *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*. Its head honcho: former director of the National Institutes of Health, Bernadine Healy, MD.

**HOW IT SCORES:** Earns a straight A from AIP; meets all NCIB and BBB standards.

**WHERE THE MONEY GOES:** This popular group raises a lot—about \$2.4 billion last year! Of that, \$2.3 billion went right back out. About 90 percent went to programs; about 10 percent to fundraising and administration.

**HOW TO DONATE:** Gifts can be general or allocated to a local chapter or the National Disaster Relief Fund. Send checks to American Red Cross, PO Box 37243, Washington, DC 20013; for credit-card donations, call 800-HELP-NOW (800-435-7669). For more, call your local chapter or go to [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).



## MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

**WHAT IT DOES:** Not many charities have won a Nobel Peace Prize. Then again, how many are essentially a band of doctors who'll provide surgery, vaccinations and other care to victims of armed conflict, epidemics and you-name-it disasters? Just last year this group took



on outbreaks of meningitis in Cameroon and tuberculosis in Armenia.

**HOW IT SCORES:** This organization also gets a straight A from AIP, and it meets all BBB and NCIB standards.

**WHERE THE MONEY GOES:** Of the \$35 million on tap in 1999, it spent about \$27 million—87 percent on programs, 13 percent on administration and fundraising.

**HOW TO DONATE:** Send checks to Doctors Without Borders USA, 6 East 39th St., 8th Fl., New York, NY 10016. For more, call 888-392-0392 or log on to [www.doctorswithoutborders.org](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org).

## American Heart Association



**WHAT IT DOES:** Imagine that a mass murderer moved into your neighborhood and invited everyone for tea. In a way that's heart disease, the nation's insidious top killer. Every 33 seconds an American dies of cardiovascular disease. As bad as that statistic is, it would be a lot worse without the AHA, which has funded decades of life-saving research, from diagnosis to diet. Fifty years ago, we had no idea what cholesterol or homocysteine were. The AHA's hope: that in an-

other 50 we won't have to worry about either—or heart disease, for that matter.

**HOW IT SCORES:** Earns an A- from AIP and meets all NCIB and BBB standards.

**WHERE THE MONEY GOES:** Of the roughly \$451 million it raised last year, about 78 percent went to research and education, 22 percent to administration/fundraising.

**HOW TO DONATE:** Send checks to American Heart Association, 7272 Greenville Ave., Dallas, TX 75231-4596. For more information, call 800-242-8721 or go to [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org).



**WHAT IT DOES:** Founded in 1946 to increase the independence of the blind or visually impaired, this great group has helped people all over the country learn to care for and partner with a working dog. While it is a relatively small foundation, all training, services and dogs are free, thanks not only to donations but to an invaluable network of roughly 300 volunteers and 64 staffers.

**HOW IT SCORES:** The AIP gives the foundation an A-, while both the BBB and the NCIB vouch for its good work.

**WHERE THE MONEY GOES:** For fiscal year 1999, it brought in \$6 million and spent about \$3.9 million. Roughly 10.8 percent went to management and fundraising; the rest to dog training and other services.

**HOW TO DONATE:** Send checks to the Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind, Inc., 371 E. Jericho Turnpike, Smithtown, NY 11787. For more info, call 800-548-4337 or go to [www.guidedog.org](http://www.guidedog.org).



# Also Worth Considering

**THE FOLLOWING 15 GROUPS** also rated extremely well. In fact, several were close to making the top four but either hadn't been evaluated by all three watchdogs or hadn't quite managed to pass all three. And surviving a three-way check—in-

cluding getting at least an A– grade from AIP—was a must. Nevertheless, all are worthy contenders on any list of top health causes. Also, while many are very familiar, for those that are less so we've added some extra information.

## 1. National Childhood Cancer Foundation

**AIP grade:** A+

**BBB:** Doesn't meet all standards

**NCIB:** Meets all standards

PO Box 60012, Arcadia, CA 91066-6012;  
800-458-6223; [www.nccf.org](http://www.nccf.org)

When you think of your child or grandchild as one in a million, you're not thinking of cancer. But those can be the odds of catching a rare form. Luckily, NCCF can connect you to other families coping with the same unusual disease and help you find treatment centers. Of the \$15 million it spent in 1999, 94.6 percent went to research. Note: NCCF met 22 of the BBB's 23 standards. Its failure: The board of trustees meets only twice yearly, not three times.

## 2. Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation

**AIP grade:** A+

**BBB:** Not rated

**NCIB:** Meets all standards

2950 31st St., #125, Santa Monica, CA 90405;  
888-499-HOPE (4673); [www.pedaids.org](http://www.pedaids.org)

Actor Paul Glaser lost both his wife, Elizabeth, and daughter, Ariel, to AIDS—unwitting victims of a transfusion Elizabeth received and transmitted to her children. Because treating AIDS in kids is entirely different than adults, the Foundation funds research as well as education, and helps financially-pressed families.

## 3. National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Depression

**AIP grade:** A+

**BBB:** Not rated

**NCIB:** Meets all standards

60 Cutter Mill Rd., Suite 404, Great Neck, NY 11021; 800-829-8289; [www.narsad.org](http://www.narsad.org)

Psychiatric patients fill one fourth of all US hospital beds—more than cancer, heart disease

and respiratory diseases combined. Research gets 100 percent of donations because two family foundations cover all staff and fundraising costs.

## 4. Crohn's & Colitis Foundation Of America

**AIP grade:** A

**BBB:** Doesn't meet all standards

**NCIB:** Meets all standards

386 Park Ave. South, 17th Fl., New York, NY 10016; 800-932-2423; [www.cffa.org](http://www.cffa.org)

These diseases—which inflame the gastrointestinal tract and can cause crippling diarrhea and pain—are the kind that no one wants to talk about, even with a doctor. Luckily, people who have them also have the foundation, which provides information on the latest treatments, support groups, coping tips and more.

## 5. Prevent Blindness America

**AIP grade:** A–

**BBB:** Not rated

**NCIB:** Meets all standards

500 E. Remington Rd., Schaumburg, IL 60173;  
800-331-2020; [www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org)

The nation's leading eye-health and safety group, PBA has worked since 1908 to fund research and education about blindness.

## 6. Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

**AIP grade:** A–

**BBB:** Not rated

**NCIB:** Meets all standards

6931 Arlington Rd., Bethesda, MD 20814;  
800-FIGHT-CF; [www.cff.org](http://www.cff.org)

Cystic fibrosis is a complex, genetic lung disease that kills half its victims by age 32. But CFF



## Giving To One Person's Health

Perhaps you'd rather save the health of your family, not the world. That's what my husband's Aunt Weezie did, bestowing on each of her children and grandchildren a thorough preventive medical exam from the prestigious Cooper Clinic in Dallas. The cost is high—\$1,800 to \$2,400—but she felt the rewards, including education on maintaining good health for life, were worth her generosity.

Cooper is only one of several programs nationwide that pamper as well as prod people toward better health habits; some throw in luxurious accommodations and a massage. Programs range from one day to two weeks, and can include everything from healthy-cooking classes and stress workshops to blood and bone-density tests, EKGs, hearing, lung and glaucoma exams, cancer screenings and much more. Typical cost for "the works" for one week: \$5,000.

• **Cooper Wellness Program**, 12230 Preston Rd., Dallas, TX 75230; 800-444-5192; [www.cooperwellness.com](http://www.cooperwellness.com)

• **Duke Executive Health Program**, Duke Center for Living, 1300 Morreene Rd., Durham, NC 27705; 800-235-3853; [www.dukecenter.org](http://www.dukecenter.org)

• **DestinationsHealth at the Ojai Valley Inn and Spa**. Ojai is in California but the program was devised by doctors at Yale University, which is why the contact is DestinationsHealth, 40 Temple St., New Haven, CT 06510; 800-709-7019.





## Two Special Cases

provides hope and power, including access to lung transplants and the latest clinical trials. It also funds more than 125 care and research centers. In 1999, *Smart Money* magazine ranked it the top health charity.

### 7. AMC Cancer Research Center

**AIP grade:** A-

**BBB:** Not rated

**NCIB:** Meets all standards

1600 Pierce St., Denver, CO 80214;

800-321-1557; [www.amc.org](http://www.amc.org)

This premier nonprofit research institute is dedicated to preventing prostate, breast, skin and other cancers and chronic diseases.

Its Cancer Information and Counseling Line (800-525-3777) provides medical information, emotional support and resource referrals.

### 8. Cancer Care

**AIP grade:** B+

**BBB:** Not rated

**NCIB:** Meets all standards

275 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10001;

800-813-4673; [www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org)

When you hear, "You have cancer," your head spins, flooded with fear and concerns. That's where Cancer Care comes in, allowing you to teleconference with top specialists nationwide, so you'll be better armed with questions for your own doctor. You'll also learn what side effects to expect, how to manage pain, fatigue, stress, health insurance and more. You can be put in touch with social workers and support groups in person, by phone and on line.

### 9. Heifer Project International

**AIP grade:** B

**BBB:** Meets all standards

**NCIB:** Meets all standards

PO Box 8058, Little Rock, AR 72203;

800-422-0474; [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org)

"If you give a starving man a fish, you've given him dinner. If you teach him how to fish, he can feed himself." That's the idea behind the Heifer Project, which gives cows—and chickens, goats, sheep, bees and other food or income animals—to impoverished families everywhere. It also teaches efficient farming. More than 4 million families in 118 countries have received livestock since HPI began in 1944.

• **Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research**, 840 Third St., Santa Rosa, CA 95404; 800-850-4726; [www.MichaelJFox.org](http://www.MichaelJFox.org)  
Although still too new to be reviewed by the BBB and others, this foundation has joined forces with the Parkinson's Action Network. Backed by the popularity of actor Fox, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's at an unusually young age, it has already become a force in Washington, where it is lobbying for research dollars to treat and prevent this degenerative brain disease.

• **[www.thehungersite.com](http://www.thehungersite.com)**. This is the world's first "click to donate" site. Funded by corporate sponsors—who combine "giving back" with the hope that you'll visit their sites afterward—each click buys a quarter cup of food per sponsor for the United Nations World Food Program, at no cost to you. More than 88 million visitors have donated more than 22 million pounds of rice and other free food to feed the hungry.

### 10. American Diabetes Association

**AIP grade:** B

**BBB:** Meets all standards

**NCIB:** Meets all standards

1701 North Beauregard St., Alexandria, VA

22311; 800-342-2383; [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

There has never been a greater need for the ADA, thanks in part to soaring rates of type 2 ("adult onset") diabetes. Why the jump? More than one half of Americans are overweight or obese, prime risk factors for type 2.

### 11. Arthritis Foundation

**AIP grade:** B

**BBB:** Not rated

**NCIB:** Meets all standards

1330 West Peachtree St., Atlanta, GA 30309;

800-283-7800; [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)

This charity single-handedly provides over \$20 million in grants for scientists researching the cure, prevention and treatment of the country's biggest crippler: arthritis.

### 12. American Cancer Society

**AIP grade:** B

**BBB:** Meets all standards

**NCIB:** Meets all standards

1599 Clifton Rd. NE, Atlanta, GA 30329;

800-227-2345; [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

Few organizations top the venerable American Cancer Society when it comes to raising money to fight this large family of feared diseases. ACS brought in \$558 million in 1998, which makes it the fourth top charitable fund-raiser overall.

### 13. National Osteoporosis Foundation

**AIP grade:** B-

**BBB:** Not rated

**NCIB:** Meets all standards

1232 22nd St. NW, Washington, DC 20037;

202-223-2226; [www.nof.org](http://www.nof.org)

As many as one in two women and one in eight men over 50 will have a fracture due to osteoporosis, the silent "brittle bone" disease. And 72,000 die each year due to complications from hip fractures. A woman's risk of hip fracture is equal to her risk of breast, uterine and ovarian cancer combined.

### 14. Alzheimer's Association

**AIP grade:** B-

**BBB:** Meets all standards

**NCIB:** Meets all standards

919 North Michigan Ave., Ste. 1100, Chicago,

IL 60611; 800-272-3900; [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

The leading group in fighting Alzheimer's, this association has poured over \$100 million into research over the past 20 years.

### 15. March of Dimes

**AIP grade:** B-

**BBB:** Meets all standards

**NCIB:** Meets all standards

1275 Mamaroneck Ave., White Plains, NY

10605; 888-663-4637; [www.modimes.org](http://www.modimes.org)

It has long worked for the day when all babies are born healthy, funding birth-defects research, educational programs and increased prenatal care—17 percent of mothers still get no medical attention during the first trimester.



# How To Give Without Being Taken

**WHEN CHOOSING A CHARITY, be choosy.** If you're considering giving to organizations other than those listed here, here's how to ensure they're worthy of your gift.

✱ First, be sure you've got the group you want—not a sound-alike—by checking it with one of our charity watchdogs (see box, page 20) or with your state's charity registration office (about 36 states register charities, usually as part of the Attorney General's office).

✱ Know the group's intent and how it achieves it. "If the mission and the means are not specific, that can be a red flag," says Bennett Weiner, director of the CBBB's Philanthropic Advisory Service.

✱ Follow our watchdogs' lead and donate to groups that spend *at least* 60 percent on their cause and under 40 percent on fundraising and administration costs. Otherwise you may be funding luxury offices or high salaries rather than a cure.

✱ If you'd like funds to go to a particular purpose—research, education, a specific calamity—state so in a note sent with your check. "But recognize that charities need to spend money on fundraising and administration. If everyone restricted gifts, they wouldn't be able to operate," Weiner points out.

✱ Ask for written information and be wary of groups that won't send it until you donate or because there "isn't time" or it's "so costly." Expect proof that your contribution is tax-deductible, a mission statement, list of directors, annual report and audited financial data (including a completed IRS Form 990 for nonchurch groups taking in over \$25,000 annually).

✱ Look at the bottom line. "If a group routinely raises 50 percent more than it uses, why are they holding onto it rather than spending it?" asks Dan Parsons, executive vice president, Better Business Bureau of Metropolitan Houston, TX.

✱ If a charity devotes a large amount to "educating the public," find out how much is separate from solicitation, warns the AIP. A letter that provides information about a disease and asks for money is solicitation, not education. Ask what the major educational accomplishments have been and be sure those who need it most are the ones getting it.

✱ "All proceeds will go to charity" means only what's left after expenses—which can vary greatly—will go to the cause.

✱ Know that when you give in response to a telemarket call, only about a third of your donation gets to the charity.

✱ Refuse offers to pick up your contribution in person and don't respond to unsolicited phone calls asking for a credit-card donation over the phone. Request written material; then, if you're satisfied with what you receive, mail a check.

✱ Checks should be made payable only to the full name of the charity. You'll need a written receipt for all tax-deductible contributions of \$250 or more.

✱ Before contributing on the Internet via a credit card, look for a statement that says the charity's site has "encryption capability" to protect your card number. If in doubt, mail a check.

✱ Don't succumb to sob stories, high-pressure tactics or guilt over receiving unsolicited "gifts," such as address labels.

✱ For more tips, request a free copy of the BBB's Holiday 2000 edition of its charity newsletter. Send your name and address to: Holiday Giving, c/o Council of Better Business Bureaus, 4200 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 800, Arlington VA 22203. **R**



## Helping Hands On The Internet

**In addition to our watchdogs,** several other groups keep tabs on charities and have useful web sites:

- **www.guidestar.org** Run by Philanthropic Research, Inc., GuideStar provides information—drawn mainly from required IRS filings—about the purposes and finances of more than 640,000 public charities.
- **www.helping.org** Created by the AOL Foundation, this site includes GuideStar's information and also lets you donate online.
- **www.irs.ustreas.gov/prod/bus\_info/eo** Run by the IRS, you can search its list of nonprofit organizations by city, state or tax-exempt status. (Tax-exempt status does not mean the IRS has endorsed the group.)
- **www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/giving/index.html** Maintained by the Federal Trade Commission's Operation Missed Giving, the site offers advice on how to make sure a gift will be used effectively and has links to several other charity monitors.