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**Kristin  
Davis**  
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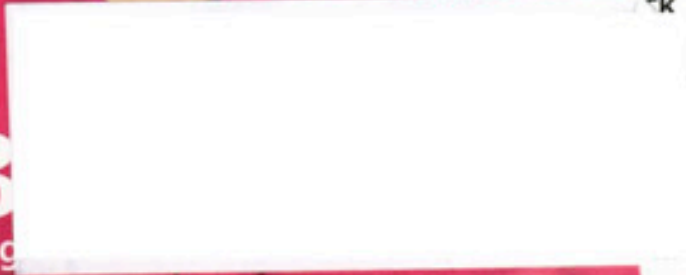
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ERASE 10 YEARS




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“I would love to have children.  
**I would love to adopt.**  
And I would still like to find  
a man and have a baby with  
him. I haven't given up.”

See more photos  
of Kristin in Africa at  
[Health.com/kristindavis](http://Health.com/kristindavis).  
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# Kristin Davis

*As Global Ambassador for Oxfam International, Kristin is a tireless champion for women and children in need. Here, she reveals why her work in Africa gives her hope, what makes her happiest, and the major life change she's considering ...*

## her healthy life secret

By Jennifer Graham Kizer  
Photography by Don Flood

**F**or six years, Kristin Davis played Park Avenue-posh Charlotte on HBO's *Sex and the City*, a role she reprises in the new big-screen version. So it's strange to imagine the Emmy-nominated actress in a sweltering South African village, serving lunch to orphans with AIDS. But, in fact, she recently returned from a trip during which she did just that.

Kristin began supporting Oxfam International, a confederation of aid groups working against poverty and injustice, after the December 2004 tsunami in South Asia. Later, she became a Global Ambassador, a role she describes as "basically a witness" to share peoples' stories. She's a natural fund-raiser, too. After reuniting with her castmates for *Sex and the City: The Movie*, the actress auctioned a chance to accompany her to the film's premiere. The winning bidder donated \$52,100 to Oxfam.

Here, Kristin shares what she saw in Mozambique, South Africa, and Uganda, why the people she met there—and the generosity of Americans—have given her a greater sense of hope, and how her travels have changed her life forever.

### How did you learn about Oxfam International?

After the tsunami, I had that helpless feeling you get when something bad happens and you don't know what to do. I went to a Web site that analyzed how much of each dollar donated actually goes to charities—and Oxfam was at the tippy-top of the list. The thing that struck me is that they try to rebuild in a way they think will be self-sustaining. They don't want people to end up in a state of poverty because this disaster happened. So I gave money to them.

### Why did the tsunami affect you so deeply?

Two things: I was brought up in a household where it was assumed that you would do volunteer work. That was a huge gift my parents gave me. My mom used to volunteer for Planned Parenthood, which in South Carolina is a very important and even dangerous thing to do. My parents still go on Habitat for Humanity trips to build houses. But also, I'd been to Bali and Indonesia four or five times, so I think I felt a little more connected because I'd been there.



## How did you go from donor to ambassador?

I was at a party George Clooney was throwing to help with the crisis in Darfur, and I started chatting with two women who work for Oxfam. One said, "You should go on a trip with us." I said, "I'd love to. Where do you need me to go?" And she said, "Literally, if you name a place, we need you to go there."

## How did you settle on Mozambique, South Africa, and Uganda?

Oxfam identifies areas where people are living in extreme poverty, which means they earn less than \$2 a month—a lot of people we met live on less than \$1 a month. My main focus is women's issues. In a war-torn area like Uganda, the women are putting things back together. And in South Africa, there's a lot of violence against women, and, of all the countries in the world, it has the most people with AIDS.

## You visited Soweto in South Africa. What was your impression of the AIDS crisis there?

During that first trip, I kept asking, "Why aren't these people on ARVs?" [Antiretroviral drugs, the standard medications

## You're tearing up as you talk about this. Did you cry while you were there?

Sometimes, in my hotel room. But when I'm there I feel like the people there have the right to cry. I don't. I'm the most blessed human being in the world because I have the chance to visit. When you're there, it doesn't feel as hopeless as it does back here, reading the depressing statistics in the newspaper.



**Here I am with Jabu:** She teaches native dance to children in Soweto—and she handmade these dolls for me.

## Who, in particular, inspired you?

In Soweto, we went to a place called Mama Grace's Soup Kitchen, where we served lunch to an adorable group of children wearing school uniforms. Mama Grace is an older, single woman who feeds 250 kids a day.

## Where are the kids' parents?

Because of the AIDS epidemic, there is a missing generation. There are just children and older people. Before we got there we read that we'd be serving "heads of household." These are AIDS orphans left on their own in the household—dirt floors, no electricity, no running water, and raising younger brothers and sisters. They come to Mama Grace's to eat.

## Are you hopeful about South Africa?

Yes. Everywhere I go, I see people making an effort. The government is making an effort, and the pharmaceutical companies have made a huge effort. That absolutely gives me hope.

## On your second trip, you visited Uganda, where warfare has forced thousands of people from their homes.

They live in IDP camps, which means Internally Displaced People. We need to help them to get back into their villages. Oxfam helps them get clean water.

**Inside Mama Grace's Soup Kitchen:** These are "heads of household" waiting to eat a hot, nutritious meal.



**In Soweto, South Africa:** These children and I are waiting outside Mama Grace's Soup Kitchen.

**“You meet these people, and they have so much joy and pride. The conditions are shocking, but people are finding ways to make it with no help. Regular people in the communities are filling the need.”**

used to manage HIV and AIDS.] But that was two-and-a-half years ago, and, at that time, those types of drugs were too expensive.

## They're more affordable now, right?

Yes, they are. But part of the problem is getting people to *want* to take ARVs. If they don't have hot meals to eat, taking ARVs is not going to matter. These people don't have food. They don't have doctors. I met women taking care of people with AIDS, and they didn't even have gloves. On my first trip I felt just shocked, the whole time.





**In Rustenburg, South Africa:**  
We learned about the impact HIV and AIDS have on the area and what's being done to fight them.

are dying. It's wrong. If I'd just been sitting here with that kind of thought, I might be thinking there is no God.

**So, the work that you do with Oxfam has changed your perspective?**

Yes, because I've had a chance to see people who don't have anything and are still doing OK, people who don't have any reason to feel hopeful yet still have hope.

**Was it strange to return home and promote *Sex and the City: The Movie*, whose characters are famous for loving to shop?**

It was, but it was never our goal to sell shoes and bags. Our goal is to talk about women who are there for each other, who prop each other up. We're not about the shoes and the bags—which isn't to say we don't love them. Cynthia [Nixon] is the stark opposite of what these characters are about. I think maybe the other three of us enjoy it a little bit more than Cyn.

**After the show ended, did you keep in touch?**

Absolutely. We were never really apart. Cynthia and I live literally blocks from each other in New York City. I have a place in L.A., too, and both Cynthia and Sarah [Jessica Parker] have worked in L.A., so I got to see them. Kim [Cattrall] did some plays and movies in England, which made it a little harder, but we have a strong bond.

**How do you deal with gossip about so-called catfights on the set?**

There's a point when you say, "I can't control the media. I can't control the world." Among us, we know the truth.

**Is there pressure to be in shape for *SATC*?**

I know we have to be thin, but our producers have never told me to lose weight. Focusing on being thin really doesn't work for me, so I focus on being healthy and having energy. I think life is too short—and, frankly, I love chocolate.



There was a certain point when I realized—You know what?—I'm just not going to be the thinnest actress out there. There's always going to be a thinner girl. I don't think you get parts based on being the thinnest girl. (Continues on page 192)

**In northern Uganda:** This is me at a camp with two goats. If you want to donate goats to people in the area, go to [www.oxfamamericaunwrapped.com](http://www.oxfamamericaunwrapped.com).

Malaria is a big problem in Uganda. If you have no water, have to walk miles to get it, and have an open bowl, a malaria-infested mosquito could get into it. We give them jerry cans with tops.

**Is there one presidential candidate you think will be most responsive to these issues?**

I love both Democrats [Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama] and would support either one. But people I've talked to in Africa are excited about Obama. I loved hearing people around the world be excited about our country.

**Has it been jarring to travel back and forth from America to places of abject poverty?**

It's weird. We were in northern Uganda, and I got an e-mail from one of our wardrobe people. Versace wanted to make bags for us and was asking what color I'd like: "Do you want red or turquoise?" The juxtaposition of the two situations is mind-bending. But if I didn't have the one, I wouldn't be able to expose and help the other. When I got back, I really felt the generosity here. My friends always ask me about [Oxfam], and they send checks. I believe Americans want to help.

**Have your travels led you to ask questions like, "Is there a God"?**

Quite frequently, yes. And I mostly feel that there is. If I'd just been here [in the United States] and hadn't gone there [to Africa], I might have decided there isn't a God.

**Why is that?**

In our world of fame there's a lot of meanness, and for no reason. Personally, I really wish we were not at war. People

Page 138: Hair: Tara Smith/Solo Artists, Makeup: Heather Curcio/www.closeteragency.com, Fashion styling: Elizabeth Stewart/Marek and Associates, Page 140: Anne Van Kien (top right), © Nabil/Blur Photo-Oxfam International (left and bottom right); Page 141: © Nabil/Blur Photo-Oxfam International



I don't think you fall in love based on being the thinnest girl. It sounds simplistic, but I think we forget that.

### You're 43, and you look 30. What's your secret?

Thank you. I don't know. My mom looks great for her age, so I think genetics has a lot to do with it. Also, I don't drink, I don't smoke, and I love my Ahava sunscreen.

### You don't drink at all?

No, I'm a recovering alcoholic. I've never hid it, but I've been sober the whole time I've been famous, so it wasn't like I had to go to rehab publicly.

### So you pretend to sip Cosmos.

It's caused a lot of confusion out in the world. I get sent many a Cosmo! I

Our goal was never to sell shoes but to talk about women who are there for each other, propping each other up."



Kristin with her "girls": Real-life pals Parker, Nixon, and Cattrall.

never drink them. I believe [alcoholism] is a disease. I don't think you can mess with it. There was a time when people who didn't know me well would say, "Couldn't you just have one glass of champagne?" And I would say, "No." I'm doing well. I still have occasional bad days. Why risk it?

### The SATC characters are admittedly fashion-obsessed. Do you like to shop?

There's not a Prada collection I don't enjoy! But sometimes I'm like, "Do I really need another pair of shoes? No."

### You play a character whose #1 goal in life is to marry and have children. Do you relate?

Well, obviously not! If that were true, I'd be miserable right now. But I can relate to feeling the pressure society puts on a person. My family has never been focused on that for me. I'd love to have children, though. I'd also love to adopt a child—I think about it a lot.

### Would you consider going Angelina Jolie's route and adopting from abroad?

After my first trip, my friends asked, "Where's the baby?" And I said, "We didn't go to any orphanages," which doesn't mean I wasn't tempted. But I'd see children who were being cared for by their grandmothers and older siblings, and I wouldn't want to take them away from that. Also, I'm working on myself. If I'm going to be a single mother, I don't want to take it lightly.

### You wouldn't want to adopt, then hand the child to a nanny.

Absolutely not. And frankly, I don't know anyone who does that. Sarah and Cynthia are very, very hands-on mothers, and it's been amazing to watch them be able to do it. But if I'm by myself, then I'll have to be the provider and the good mother. I'd still like to find a man and have a baby with him if that's possible. I haven't given up.

### When do you feel happiest?

When I'm walking my dogs.

### What woman most inspires you?

Wow, so many. My mom. Angelina. Hillary Clinton. Maya Angelou. Helen Mirren.

### Have you met all of them?

I've met Angelina. I don't know her well, but what she's done is fantastic.

### Because she gives a significant portion of her salary to the charities she works with?

Yes, and just because of the fact that she has adopted kids. I admire anyone who adopts children.

### Many people involved with charities say they get back more than they give. Do you?

Absolutely. I love acting, but you can get lost in the shallow aspects of it. The charitable work I do makes me feel like my fame is worth something, like there's a purpose to the famousness. ●

## Inspired by Kristin?

Here are three easy ways you can make a difference:

- Go to [www.oxfamamerica.org/join](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/join), and sign up for Oxfam International's e-mail list. You'll receive important alerts about how you can help end poverty and injustice around the world. Spread the word by writing letters to policy makers and local newspapers.
- Skip a meal or organize a lunch fast among your co-workers, then donate the money you save to Oxfam's fight against hunger. Want to do even more? Host an Oxfam America Hunger Banquet to educate your school, group, or the public on hunger issues and to raise funds to support Oxfam's efforts in helping some of the 2.5 billion people struggling to survive on less than \$2 a day.
- If you're looking for a truly meaningful gift, visit [www.oxfamamericaunwrapped.com](http://www.oxfamamericaunwrapped.com) to donate a goat, plant 50 trees, or give dozens of other gifts in a friend or family member's name. Or make a tax-deductible donation at [www.oxfamamerica.org/whatyoucando/donate](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/whatyoucando/donate). —BRITTANI TINGLE