



JOHN  
CHITTICK

activist  
'66

## Walking with Class

For fans of the Olympic games, heroes are chiseled athletes that fly through the air, cut through water, and sprint over hurdles; but for the thousands of adolescents visited by **Dr. John Chittick '66** over the past two decades, true heroes come in somewhat different packages. At first glance, few would expect the five-foot tall, slightly overweight 64-year-old volunteer to have traveled so far and worked so hard to spread awareness about AIDS/HIV to teens across the globe.

In recognition of his humanitarian work, Dr. Chittick was nominated as one of the top finalists to receive the "Prestigiously Cool" Classy Volunteer-of-the-Year Award for 2012. While the national award is a major boost to his organization, Dr. Chittick continues to take each day as seriously as the last, focusing on regions that truly need help. "We only go to countries that need help. We go into the slums, the most rural outposts. I dislike visiting the government ministries, there are no people to help there," he says.

In the 20 years since selling his Boston-based art publishing business, Dr. Chittick has visited over 85 countries, received numerous honors (including Deerfield's 2001 Heritage Award), and most importantly, altered the lives of countless youths in troubled areas—all while suffering from degenerative diabetes and heart disease.

Starting with his original research at Harvard University, Dr. Chittick realized there was very little being done to garner teens' attention regarding the danger of HIV. "Ninety percent of young people never get tested, and even fewer understand the risk," he says.

Dr. Chittick has sought to inspire a drive in young people by banishing stigmas related to HIV testing. "I'm driven by this feeling that I can save lives and my volunteers can save lives and that every one of these young people has the ability to go out and save their best friend's life," he says.

Since its inception in 1994, Dr. Chittick's volunteer group, TeenAIDS, has managed to operate solely on the donations

of private individuals, including Deerfield alumni. "We're a modest organization money-wise, but we have an international outreach that surprises most people," Dr. Chittick says. Today the TeenAIDS board also includes Deerfield alumni **Gig Faux '80**, **Jim Dunning '66**, and **Bob Hardman '66**.

In 2014, Dr. Chittick plans to launch his most ambitious venture yet, the Global AIDS Walk, during which he will visit 24 new countries over the course of just two years. Throughout this venture, Dr. Chittick will seek to pass along his knowledge and work to eager new volunteers, and he has begun looking for youth volunteer trainers who can join him for two to three week stretches.

Dr. Chittick understands the importance of global exploration as a development asset, and also hopes to tie his work back to the Deerfield student body. "We'll be taking 18- to 22-year-olds who meet the standards, and we'd love to have people from Deerfield coming along for parts of the global walk," he says. But at the same time he cautions about the reality of his work: "I will show my volunteers how to do this street outreach, and how to work with people in other countries, but when I take them along they'll have to understand they could be in some nasty situations."