

# A Man's Life

## THE HEROIC HEALER

Doctor, wrestler, rugger, chief: Chuck Dietzen, M.D., grabs a lot from life but gives back more.

By Denis Boyles



**CHUCK DIETZEN, M.D.**

**Age 55**

**Height 6'1"**

**Weight 190 lb**

### ▼ Health Ambassador

He's founder and president of Timmy Global Health, named for his older brother, who died in infancy. This non-profit sends volunteers and medical professionals to deliver health care to underserved people in six countries.

### ▼ Physician

He's chief of pediatric rehabilitation medicine at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis. Since the early 1990s, he's been volunteering his time at a weeklong summer camp for children and teens with breathing difficulties.

### ▼ Athlete

He played QB for the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the Brisbane Bulldogs in Australia, and minor-league teams; played rugby for Purdue, Ball State, and the Bad Boy Rugby Club. He still plays in alumni rugby games.

### ▼ Pro Wrestler

He wrestles to raise money for children in need of health care in the United States and abroad. When he performs as the villain Dr. Doom, his scripted finishing move is drawn from medicine: He'll "inject" his opponent.

### ▼ Chief of Light

The Ogoni people of Nigeria gave him this title. He helped finance the building of two schools in Ogoniland.

▶ **Turn the page to dive into Dr. Dietzen's life.**



**“If you’re with kids, do what they do—with awe! I work hard, so when I play, I play very hard.”**

**How a Children's Hospice Doctor Handles the Worst**

“As a medical director of pediatric hospice for seven years, I was often confronted with the death of a child. That was my greatest fear about becoming a doctor, and one I had to face multiple times. These kids are my heroes, and just talking about them brings tears to my eyes. I think people can easily be overwhelmed. Many of my friends, some of them doctors, were. You realize you could just stand among these children, many of whom have lost their hair

and are undergoing painful treatments, and feel hopeless. But you have to equip yourself to make a difference, to step close enough to the fire to get burned yourself. As a child takes his or her last breaths, their breathing rate goes slower and slower. I say nothing to the parents as this happens but wait with them and am simply present as my hero passes away.”

**This Physician's Golden Rule**

“For a kid in hospice care, you can always bend a rule, but you never break a promise.”



**► MED SCHOOL FOR DADS: 4 THINGS TO KNOW**

- 1/ CPR and basic first aid. The Red Cross will give you a lesson.
- 2/ Emergency evacuation for your home.
- 3/ Proper restraints for your child in the car.
- 4/ Never shake a child or infant. You'll do irreversible damage to your child's brain and eyes.



**► MY EVERYDAY 15-MINUTE UPPER-BODY WORKOUT**

- 100 standing curls (25-pound dumbbells)
- 100 seated military presses (25-pound dumbbells)
- 100 crunches with a C-shaped ab roller
- 100 deep pushups with the ab roller (back kept straight)
- 100 deep dips with the ab roller (legs extended)

**A Healer's Favorite Teaching Tool for Kids**

“When I examine a new patient, I put the stethoscope in her ears and let her hear her heart, and then hear my heart. We are 99.99 percent the same.”

**The Picture He Looks at Daily**

“It's a photo of a little girl named Abby. I met her in hospice when she was 3 and diagnosed with a terminal illness. She was such a brave little girl and so determined, but everyone insisted she was going to die and kept telling me not to get my hopes up. I also have another photo of her. She's 24 and in her wedding dress. She and her husband now have two children of their own, and they've adopted two more. Miracles happen.”

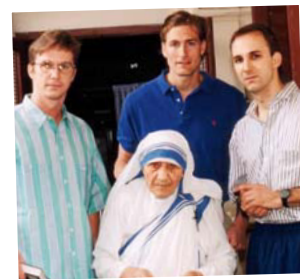
**Fitness for This Man's Life**

“I'm a big fan of elliptical trainers. They eliminate impact on the joints and make it easier to watch TV or read while doing cardio.”

**A Rugby Player's Take on Soccer**

“Of the three football-type games—rugby, soccer, and American football—soccer is the safest, and rugby the most dangerous. Soccer is 90 minutes of men acting like they're hurt when they're not; rugby is 80 minutes of men acting like they're not hurt when they are.”

**The doctor/wrestler strong-arming a pint-sized opponent.**



**Dr. Dietzen, left, with Mother Teresa.**

**On Sitting with Mother Teresa**

“We volunteered to help at her clinic in Calcutta [in 1997]. You'd think when you're taken in to meet her that there'd be something pretty impressive. Maybe not in the trumpets-and-red-carpet category, but I thought there'd be some formality, a living saint and all. But no. Finally, this little frail woman walked in, thanked us for coming, asked if she could sit down next to me, and said, ‘My best advice to you in helping our patients is never abandon them. Don't let them feel they are alone, because they aren't.’”

**On the Running of the Bulls**

“If you're going to do the run the Hemingway way, just get out in front of them and run as fast as you can. Faster. *Faster*—until you have to jump to the side. Look for a little opening in the barricade. Don't use a flash on that selfie! And when you go down, stay down.”

**Body Slam Survival Tip**

“When the good guy picks you up and slams you belly first on the canvas, you survive by doing the reverse of a perfect dive: Maximize the surface area and try to land as flat as you can.”

**On a Life of Villainy**

“If you wear a mask in wrestling, you lose. I think my record so far is 0-600. Actually, as the bad guy, I usually get disqualified.”

Courtesy: Chuck Dietzen, M.D. (Mother Teresa), Scott Homer (wrestling)