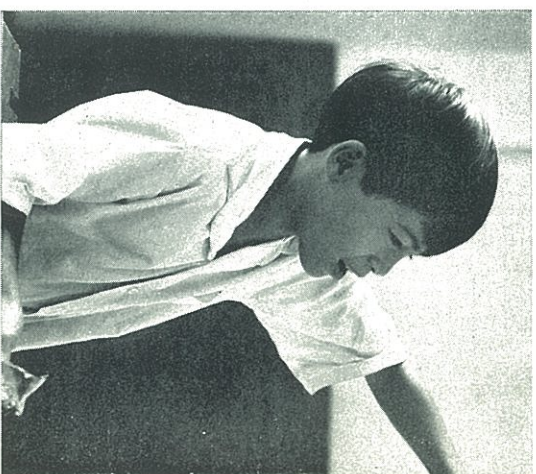


# A place to call home

Curiosity, as much as anything else, brought Dick Hughes to Vietnam. He hated the war and, after graduating from Boston University and working for a time as an actor, decided to see the country for himself as a free-lance correspondent. Post-Tet 1968 Saigon was in chaos. "The children were everywhere," Hughes remembers. "They would look at me curiously to see what kind of man I was." Most of them were street-wise and tough far beyond their years. If they weren't shining shoes, they were surviving by picking pockets, illegally changing money or even pimping. Hughes invited about a dozen of the boys to share his rented house. From the start they understood that they were free to come and go at will, and that there would be no institutional rigmarole. Even when

they went back to their illicit street activities every day, the boys knew they had a home where they could find food and clothes and medical attention. Hughes worked part-time and borrowed enough money to keep things going for a year. Most evening meals were heavy on French bread and peanut butter. By the time he needed a second house, a dribble of financial help began coming in. More important, Vietnamese doctors, dentists, lawyers and churchmen started volunteering their services. Last year resident Vietnamese staffers moved into all five houses. Hughes could probably leave now and the work would go on, but until he is convinced that it will, he won't make any plans. "I can't think about my later life," he says, "until I know what will happen to them."



After a session with a visiting barber, a boy at Pham Ngu Lao house attempts to put Hughes's hair in order. Hughes tries to visit all his Saigon houses every day.

