Top 10 Top 10s of 2010 - # 3

December 28, 2010 By Regan Hofmann

Okay. I had a little tech trouble up in the mountains of New Mexico so am a bit behind in blogging...gonna need a Blogapalooza to catch up!

I wrote this one while laying over in Phoenix hoping I could get home to blizzard-struck east coast (thankfully, I did!). It shows the next promised set of photos: Ten Places I Feel Lucky to Have Visited Through My Work

Someone posted a comment on a previous list that reminded me to remind you that these photos are NOT ranked in any order of important...nor do the lists represent the top ten of any category in an absolute sense. I could never limit the places this work had taken me to 10 favorites. But the following are ten of my favorite pictures from 10 great places I've had the privilege of visiting.

Hope the holidays are great and you all are taking a breather between last week's festivities and the upcoming uncorking of the champagne.
I had a really restorative week with my family in Santa Fe, NM. I hiked a LOT, drank a lot of Chai (okay, okay, and wine) and learned to speak 2-year-old-ese and managed to shepherd my five-year-old nephew to a mountain top and down, forgetting that my legs are twice as long as his. Poor little guy, he never whimpered. He did keep asking to stop and look at the view. Until I finally tuned in and started walking half speed.

I took an afternoon off in a spa called 10,000 Waves. It's an amazing place. During my facial, they applied frozen stem cells to my skin. The stem cells were harvested (supposedly humanely) from a French cow. I am hoping I don't sprout horns. I asked whether they could use genetically-altered stem cells and perhaps infuse my body with non-CCR5-producing T-cells (a la the Berlin Patient), but they said I'd need to go full transplant for that. And they weren't licensed for THAT procedure. So I said I'd settle for a little more collagen. For now.

Okay, on to the list:

1. The stage at Lincoln Center in Manhattan last week during an AIDS charity event. The event was called "Ivy Light" and involved a capella groups from Ivy League schools and other talent. That young man beside me is a Yale Whiffenpoof. The event raised awareness and funds for the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (for which I am an ambassador).
2. On set at The Doctors TV show. There is nothing like watching the live audience's jaws drop as people talk turkey about HIV/AIDS and teen sex. Having gotten over my stage fright, it's now fun and satisfying to do national media because I know that millions of people are getting accurate information about HIV and hopefully changing their minds for the better about the disease.
3. The auditorium at The Forman School in upstate New York. I always find students amazingly receptive

and grateful when we give them information about safe sex. I swear, contrary to paranoid parents' beliefs, the more we tell kids about sex, the less likely they are to rush off and have it. And if they do, they're more likely to have it safely.
4. At The American Institute in Taipei, Taiwan. When I arrived to give a talk about fighting HIV stigma, some people were wearing masks and most stood at the back of the room. By the time I finished speaking they had inched closer and eventually huddled around me for this photo. It was amazing to see them transform!
5. In an AIDS orphanage in Taiwan...they had to pry this little boy from my arms...
6. At an official web chat hosted by the local media in Hanoi, Vietnam. We were "supervised" by the Communist government.
7. At the Dwight Englewood School in New Jersey. They have an "AIDS Awareness Club" and invited me to speak to them. The next generation is the one that will finally slay the beast of AIDS and we must bring them along!
8. At a reading of my book, I Have Something To Tell You, at the National Arts Club in Manhattan with dear friend and fellow authoress Courtney Sheinmel. (If you have young kids, I recommend her book "Positively." It's a great ice breaker for talking to tweens and teens about safe sex.)
9. In an East African clinic. This woman had just given birth and asked me to take her photo. Her beauty struck me deeply and I remember thinking I would like everyone I've ever heard argue that we don't need to "waste money on saving people in the developing world" to see her and her newborn child--and then say again that we don't need to help the rest of the world.
10. The United States Capitol. It shocked me at first to realize that American citizens are allowed to walk straight into the offices of Congressmen and woman and Senators and speak our piece. I have had many fascinating and special moments in the Capitol (e.g. Congressional briefings sponsored by amfAR; National AIDS Strategy development meetings; and one-on-one meetings with members of Congress) but one of the most impactful moments of all was sitting in the House chamber the night that the health care reform bill passed.

Tell me, what are you favorite moments/places?

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