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Friday, August 7, 2020



worked with half a dozen organizations, either taking photos to help with their fundraising efforts, or running surgical missions, taking her to Africa, Peru, Panama, Cuba, and Central America. Though she's traveled all over the world now, her experiences in Africa stand out to



Zarnoch. "You're just present in the moment - the people I meet accept you for who you are, and if you accept them in the moment for who they are, there's this great connection that you can't find anywhere," she says. "We're so judged here. We have such cultural conformities, and I go there and they just allow me to be me. I don't find that a lot in the US."

She's photographed tribes in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Namibia, among others, and her warm and vibrant portraits of members of the tribe, mostly women and children, reflect that connection between the photographer and her subjects. "I just smile and I wave - I want to talk to them, but I know I can't because most of the time I don't have a translator," she explains. "I play with the kids, and that helps me connect with the mothers." The communication hurdle is one of the biggest challenges she faces in her work. "I want nothing more than to sit in the dirt and play with the kids and know their name and talk to the mom and see what life is like for them. What do they like? Where do they go?" Instead of speaking the same language, then, Zarnoch uses her camera to further that connection, teaching the kids to take their own photos, and showing all her subjects the photos she takes. "They've never seen themselves, they don't have mirrors. So I readily show pictures."

Zarnoch says succeeding as a nurse and a photographer come down to the same thing: "I love people. I love helping people. I love connecting." Both professions call for a high degree of empathy for others, and Zarnoch has it. "I didn't have a voice growing up," she says. "I was kind of in that era where you were seen and not heard. So I feel like I'm giving voice to those who finally want to be seen or heard." The self-described overachiever says she's not one to ever let the dust settle. "If I'm not running a mis-



sion trip, I'm shooting a mission trip. If I'm not shooting a mission trip, I work a few hours in the hospital, and if I'm not doing that I'm editing." Zarnoch says her dream is to shoot for National Geographic magazine someday. With her track record, it seems likely. And as soon as the pandemic lets up, the photographer will resume traveling again - next up, Chad and South Sudan.

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