

***Precious!*TM Family Portraits of the Hopeful and Undefeated**

Background

Four years ago, we learned of a funeral for a child in Belize, Central America, where the family didn't have even one photograph of the deceased. No picture near the casket during the service. No image to revisit in an album. The reason for the loss was poverty which struck twice, an inability to afford adequate medical care and to purchase a camera.

Think about it. Every real or projected interview as the family home was burning includes the question: What did you save first? Naturally people, especially the children and elderly come first. Next, our photo albums. Those cherished, irreplaceable memories of our lives together.

Our belief is simple: every family should have a portrait of themselves with their child(ren) and/or of their beloved child regardless of their ability to pay for it.

Life is filled with mutually satisfying relationships with those we hold dear. Having a tangible, inspiring, loving memory of this special individual completes us.

Program

Volunteer photographers will arrange to take "family" photographs at selected NGO's whose clientele are in precarious financial situations. Homeless shelters, daytime and/or residential, are just one example. Photo sessions will be organized by the cooperating organization. Permission forms, where required, will be arranged by the agency, although privacy is assured in two ways: no images will be used publicly and the DVD of participants will be provided to the organization for their secure archives. Names and contact details of all those photographed will be held closely and exclusively by the organization.

An 8x10 portrait of the family and a 5x7 of each child will be provided, at no cost, to the participants. If additional copies are requested, it will be up to the cooperating NGO what terms and conditions apply (e.g. cost or cost plus).

Portrait Day

Families will be asked to bring the child's favorite toy (where practical) or at least their "favorite smile, face or joke."

Every effort will be made to help the family / child feel relaxed and natural. Perhaps they will "snuggle," "hug" or "high five" one another. Perhaps they will be asked to respond to a question: How did you look when you got a good grade at school, tried a new food, etc.

*Precious!*TM is a program of the Milestones Project. It is our intention to inspire photographers globally to create a version of *Precious!* in their local communities.

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