

The FILM Project

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When Leah Hoskins offered to put together a slideshow that would be shown during the funeral of a fellow classmate, no one guessed it would spark a movement of change and giving.



The creation of The F.I.L.M. (Family Images for Lasting Memories) Project represents an act of kindness. Composed of some of the nation's most talented photographers, the project provides family portraits for cancer patients with the belief that the experience can provoke healing, faith and hopefulness.

Hoskins, founder and president of the project, offered her time and talent to help a family that she saw in need. While watching other people's reactions to the slideshow, she realized that her gift could be used for something much greater. In January 2011, The F.I.L.M. Project launched and has grown from just a handful to hundreds of photographers. The project originated in Indiana and now reaches countries like Germany and Australia.

Everardo Keeme, Valley photographer and F.I.L.M. volunteer, says, "So many people put off doing a family picture because they want to lose those last 10 pounds, or they want a different haircut. Now the situation is get it done. A lot of times, it's the last thing on their minds because [the patient is] worried about treatment, the cost of treatment, or how they're feeling from day to day." The unique photo session not only provides something positive for the family to look forward to but it also is a break from the dreary routine of hospital visits, therapies, and, ultimately, the fear of the unknown. Keeme, himself, has been affected by cancer in his own life, losing two family members to the disease.

Keeme recalls a recent shoot with The F.I.L.M. Project: "[The photo subjects] were hanging stockings, and they were playing a little bit of Rock Band on the Xbox. At the very end, we were taking informal shots, just the three of them on the couch hanging out. And the mom says, 'Let's take a few more' and, without warning, takes off her wig." For patients and their families, The F.I.L.M. Project inspires, empowers and provides lasting memories during difficult times.

Through the art of photography, we are able to freeze time and extend the lifespan of emotions that can fully range from happiness and love to sadness. And regardless of which emotion, people experience something beautiful through The F.I.L.M. Project process. Each photographer is sincere in wanting to gain a deeper understanding of chosen families and their stories. "I try to sit down with them first and try to get to know them," Keeme says. "That way the pictures are more representative of that." Consequently, the occasion becomes much more organic and personal, allowing the family to be as comfortable as possible.

In order to be considered for The F.I.L.M. Project, the process is very simple; families can either set up their own shoots with the organization or be nominated by others.

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The F.I.L.M. Project www.thefilmproject.net