INSPIRED

MARCH 2025 | ISSUE 136



FEATURING THE 2024 AMBASSADORS





WE LOVE OUR COMMUNITY

The National Association of Portrait and Child Photographers is a member-based association representing and promoting the community of professional portrait and child photographers.

NAPCP provides a valuable platform for seasoned veterans and rising professionals alike to share their experiences, hone their craft and raise their professional visibility.

Cover Image by Emily Cummings of Ten Little Bluebirds

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TO OUR BELOVED NAPCP COMMUNITY

As March comes to a close, we reflect on the transition from the quiet of winter to the energetic promise of spring. The

days are getting longer, and with the change in season, it's the perfect time to breathe new life into your creativity. As

we move forward, may this season inspire fresh ideas, new beginnings and a renewed passion for your craft.

In this issue, we're thrilled to announce the opening of the Master Photographer Certification for the Newborn

Category, starting May 5. This is an exciting opportunity for photographers looking to elevate their expertise and

gain recognition in the newborn photography world!

We'd also like to congratulate Valerie Eidson of Valerie Eidson Photography, our 2024 Photographer of the Year!

Valerie's dedication, vision and remarkable work have set a high standard in the industry, and we are proud to

celebrate her accomplishments this year.

Looking ahead, mark your calendars for the first NAPCP Gatherings of 2025, happening from April 14 - 20. These

local meet-ups will be the perfect opportunity to connect with fellow photographers and share inspiration, so stay

tuned for more details!

And don't forget about the 2025 International Image Competition—submissions open April 14! Start preparing your

best work for a chance to be recognized in one of the most prestigious photography competitions of the year.

This month we featured "Reflection" images and loved all of the submissions. Submissions for June's "Moody"

theme close June 1. If your work explores the beauty of atmosphere, emotion and depth, this is your chance to shine.

Don't forget to submit!

Stay Inspired!

The NAPCP Team

Your "To Do" List

APRIL 2024

ATTEND A NAPCP GATHERING

Are you looking for a chance to meet up with other NAPCP Members in your area? NAPCP Gatherings will be taking place April 14-20. To find a Gathering near you, visit napcp.com/napcp-gatherings.

SUBMIT YOUR IMAGES

The 2025 International Image Competition will open for submissions April 14! Stay tuned for all the details!

APPLY FOR MASTER CERTIFICATION

Master Certification: Newborn will open May 5! Don't miss the opportunity to increase your marketability to clients. Want to learn more? See page 84 for more details.

MAY 2024

SUBMIT YOUR "MOODY" IMAGES

Submissions are now open for the June issue of Inspired Magazine. Have an image you'd like to see published? Visit napcp.com/contribute-to-our-

magazine to submit it for consideration by June 1.

PURPOSEFUL PARTNERSHIPS

NAPCP actively inspires its members to use their gifts for a greater purpose. By aligning creativity with compassion, NAPCP members have the unique opportunity to shape the world one photograph at a time. Check out this page on the NAPCP website for more info: napcp.com/purposeful-partnerships



After a wild ride of having four babies in five years, I refined years of journalism and mommin' into an actually-enjoyable family photo experience. I'm a USMC spouse, South Carolina native, recovering homeschool mama of a four boy circus. They've taught me the most important facet of family photography: KEEP IT FUN!

As a destination family photographer in Hawaii, my primary focus is families visiting from out of state - both nuclear and extended families. The louder, the better! I work exclusively at sunrise. I provide a full service experience that culminates with printed, heirloom quality (read: wipe-clean) artwork in my clients' hands. They're not photographs until their printed!

What were some of your highlights or standout moments as an ambassador this year?

I connected with photographers who came to my event not knowing a soul. I was so impressed with their gumption to just show up! We still stay in touch and hopefully they'll make it to our next event.

How has interacting with other photographers and creatives within the association shaped your journey this year?

It gets me out of my bubble! Photography is actually quite isolating when its a full time job. I've got my workflow and rhythm pinned down, but getting out of my genre and talking gear and technical topics is really fun.

Were there any events, workshops, or collaborations you participated in that were particularly meaningful to you?

Yes, my first 10 months in Hawaii my stepfather of 30 years passed away quite unexpectedly. Because of the NAPCP ambassador program I had already connected with fellow Ambassador, Heather E. She was able to pick up sessions for me while we were off island for 10 days. It was a huge Godsend and I don't know what I would have done without her - probably cancel on everyone! All because of NAPCP.











My passion is photography that is created to be a unique representation for each client's family. I strive to make everyone casual and comfortable in front of the camera. Because I love to bring an individual touch to each photo session, I collaborate with my client's before each session to allow me to do some research and tailor each session to their individuality.

What were some of your highlights or standout moments as an ambassador this year?

Meeting beginning photographers who are so sweet and just want to start their business on the right foot. I am excited for them, but also thinking "whew" I would not want to start again!

If you were an Ambassador prior to 2024 as well, how has your role as an ambassador evolved over the years?

At first I was intimidated and worried about doing a good job. Now I feel more like a leader and that my input is valued.

How has interacting with other photographers and creatives within the association shaped your journey this year?

Oh my gosh! Everyone is so inspiring - I love that they have the same questions/worries/hopes/frustrations/goals that I do. I also love that I learn from their stories and everyday interactions in our Facebook group.

Looking back, what advice would you give to someone who would like to become a NAPCP Ambassador in the future?

I would tell them to apply! Being an ambassador has opened up a whole new world for me and helped take away the "imposter" syndrome!



I love that being an ambassador requires me to put myself out there. I am an introvert and this helps develop my skills in helping to create a community.







I am not striving for perfect, because the adventure is found in the unknown. Intimacy and adventure is what I am all about. I absolutely love families who are fun, who are real and let it fly. I love people who don't mind if their dress gets dirty, are down for a short hike, and are not afraid of getting in the water at the end of their session. I love people who don't mind if things don't go perfectly and that is just perfect to me. These are my people.

The best parts of life are the parts that surprise us. And the best photos are usually the ones we didn't know were coming.

My favorite photos are the ones where you might think your hair is blowing too much in the wind or when your kids are being their wild selves. They are the moments of perceived imperfection where I see people's most true selves.

How has interacting with other photographers and creatives within the association shaped your journey this year?

I have had some great support from other photographers in this community. Little tips and tricks that I would not have known if our paths had not crossed.

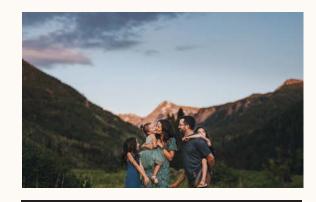
What have been some of the most significant changes you've noticed in the photography industry or community this year?

Some significant changes I am seeing in the industry is the desaturated, almost sepia, images; along with the use of AI for editing and copy writing. I don't have an

opinion on this either way, but something I have noticed.

What are your personal goals for the coming year as a photographer?

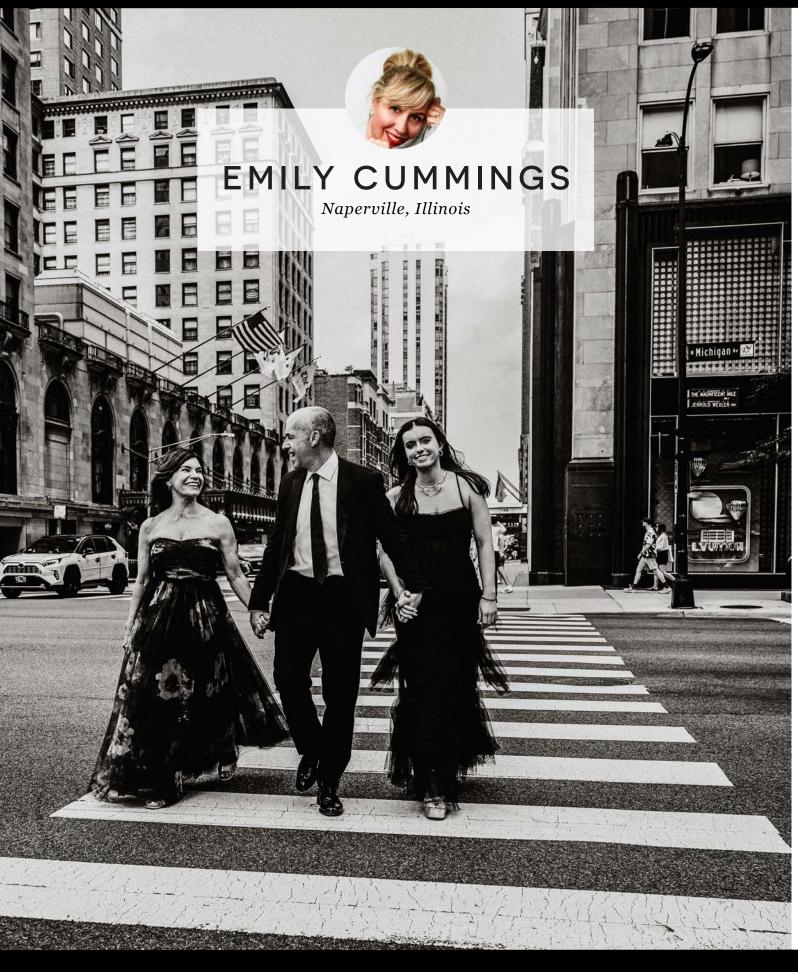
I am trying to push my business into a more luxury market without losing my down-to-earth local clients. It is a hard line to walk. My goal is to make more time to create an education platform. Something that I hope to launch in 2026.



"I have had some great support from other photographers in this community. Little tips and tricks that I would not have known if our paths had not crossed. "







What are your personal goals for the coming year as a photographer?

Despite the challenging start to 2025, I've found renewed purpose through launching The Luminous Project—an initiative born from my desire to create meaningful impact in my local community through photography. This project aims to bring women together in a powerful, uplifting way.

My primary goal is to use my photography for positive change. By capturing portraits of strong women, I hope to create a visual narrative that empowers each participant while fostering a sense of collective strength. The project is built on the belief that by highlighting each woman's unique light, we create something more powerful together than we could individually. Part of the proceeds from this project will also go to a local non-profit, Beautifully EmpowHERed.

The popularity of The Luminous Project has confirmed what I suspected—our community deeply needs this kind of supportive, affirming space. Seeing how quickly women have embraced this initiative has been both validating and motivating.

Beyond this project, I'm committed to continuing my growth as a photographer by exploring new techniques and perspectives that can further enhance the storytelling aspect of my work. I want my images to not just document moments but to convey the essence and strength of the incredible women I photograph.

Ultimately, my goal is to transform what began as a response to difficult times into a sustainable platform for community building and empowerment through the art of photography. The early success of The Luminous Project has shown me that when we align our professional skills with our deeper values, we can create ripples of positive change that extend far beyond our initial vision.



"By capturing portraits of strong women,

I hope to create a visual narrative that

empowers each participant while fostering

a sense of collective strength."







Not many people know the origin story of my photography business but in May 2015 our daughter, Reagan, was still-born during my 25th week of pregnancy. She was diagnosed with Turner Syndrome (TS). As a way to process my grief and raise awareness for TS, I started a faith-based apparel company called Reagan Twenty Five. I started taking my own product photos for my website and quickly fell in love with the art of photography and entrepreneurship. My love for photography grew as I continued to take lifestyle images of moms and their children wearing my apparel. As I began to enter into a new season of life after healing from the loss of my daughter, I decided to sell my apparel company to a mother and daughter in North Carolina and use that money to invest into Reagan25 Photography full time. Eventually, I changed the name to Heather Bienz Photography to avoid confusion, but I've been studying, perfecting and loving the art of photography ever since! After losing our daughter, I understand how precious our time is with the ones we love and how important it is to capture and celebrate the moments we have together. Time passes so quickly, so being able to help families freeze a few memories along the way is the greatest gift for me.

How has interacting with other photographers and creatives within the association shaped your journey this year?

Interacting with other photographers and creatives within NAPCP has been a transformative part of my journey this year. I've been able to have several one-on one phone calls, zoom meetings and text conversations with other ambassadors about topics I've struggled with in my business. The collaboration and sense of community have pushed me to grow not only as a photographer but also as a business owner. Being surrounded by like-minded professionals who are eager to share knowledge and offer support has inspired me to refine my craft and expand my business in new ways I wouldn't have thought of on my own. This network of creative professional photographers and business owners has also provided a wealth of insight and inspiration, helping me stay on top of industry trends and elevate the service I provide to my clients.



"Being surrounded by like-minded professionals who are eager to share knowledge and offer support has inspired me to refine my craft and expand my business in new ways I wouldn't have thought of on my own."







HEATHER DAVIDSON-MEYN

Toronto, Ontario, Canada



For me, it's the basics. I love to photograph a curated version of reality - people looking their best in classic, timeless settings together with the family and friends they love the most. I offer photography for moms who cherish real smiles, love the laughter and want to turn moments into timeless memories. I also offer portraits for professionals who cherish real smiles and value lasting first impressions.

What new skills or techniques did you learn this year through your ambassadorship?

I had a phenomenal experience at NAPCP's first Getaway in New Mexico at the beginning of 2024. Working alongside a group of amazing photographers pushed me to try new angles, perspectives and compositions - something I haven't done lately! I was so excited and inspired by the results.

What have been some of the most significant changes you've noticed in the photography industry or community this year?

In my experience, our industry is changing. AI and the fact that everyone carries a phone camera in their pocket at all times has pushed professional photographers to find new ways to offer value to both families and businesses. We're being pushed to stay relevant and it's fascinating to see how each of us evolves in this way.

What are your personal goals for the coming year as a photographer?

I've decided to rebrand my business this year - I'm going back toward the basics to offer services and imagery that people connect with, as opposed to pushing a luxury service with all the bells and whistles. I'm excited to expand my client base once again!



"I had a phenomenal experience at NAPCP's first Getaway in New Mexico at the beginning of 2024.

Working alongside a group of amazing photographers pushed me to try new angles, perspectives and compositions - something I haven't done lately! I was so excited and inspired by the results."







My name is Heather Scharf and I have been photographing weddings and families for 15 years and for the last 4 years have also fell in love with underwater photography! I started my photography business after experiencing a deep sadness over our own wedding photos. Our photographer decided not to deliver any edited images and we never got the album we paid for. I decided I would make our own album and edit the images to the best of my ability, and in the process found my passion! I started shooting weddings immediately and before I knew it my work was being published on major wedding blogs and I was able to quit my full time job! I became completely obsessed with photography overnight and have never looked back. I grew up with a fear of forgetting as I watched my grandpa die of Alzheimer's and recently lost my dad to the same disease. I have tons of albums, boxes filled with memorabilia and journals from my childhood all for the purpose of triggering a forgotten memory when I am older. And now I use my camera as my major memory preserver and am honored that others hire me to do the same for them. I believe that God has blessed me with this gift and all I really want is to let this gift flow through me to touch others. I volunteer for the Gold Hope Project and am in the process of starting a foundation where I do a free session for a family in need for every session I book. A Buy One, Give One model as having professional photos has become a luxury and I believe everyone deserves to have their memories preserved.

What were some of your highlights or standout moments as an ambassador this year?

I loved hosting events and meeting other local photographers! Photography can be such an isolating profession, but it doesn't have to be this way. There is literally no one that gets me more than another photographer as we not only share a common passion, but go through similar ups and downs of the business. I love that NAPCP is all about community and bringing photographers together!



"I learned that I love bringing people together who share a similar passion. It was fun doing the shootout with other photographers and I felt like we were all instant friends!"







Helena Goessens is a Boston-based newborn, child and family photographer specializing in fine art and lifestyle photography. Born in Mexico and raised in Spain, Helena's journey has taken her through Frankfurt and Barcelona before settling in Boston with her family of five and their beloved golden retriever. She is deeply passionate about capturing the beauty of light, color, emotions and composition, and she often incorporates Lensbaby optics to add a creative, dreamy touch to her imagery.

In addition to her expertise in family, newborn, and child photography, Helena also loves documenting the vibrant streets of Boston and the unique moments from her travels around the world. Her work has been featured in several magazines, and she has been honored as a finalist in the 2019 and 2023 Click Magazine Voice Collection.

Helena is a proud Click Pro Elite member, part of the Click Community, an ambassador for the National Association of Professional Child Photographers (NAPCP), and a Lensbaby Ambassador. Her creative approach continues to inspire both her clients and fellow photographers around the globe.

If you were an Ambassador prior to 2025 as well, how has your role as an ambassador evolved over the years?

As an ambassador since 2022, I have witnessed my role evolve significantly. Initially, it was about gaining visibility and building confidence in sharing my work. Over time, it has grown into a platform for mentorship, community leadership and fostering innovation. Each year has brought new challenges and opportunities, shaping me into a more versatile and thoughtful artist. I'm excited to carry forward the inspiration and lessons from this ambassador experience, continuing to grow as an artist and mentor in the coming years.



"Over time, my role as an Ambassador
has grown into a platform for mentorship,
community leadership, and fostering
innovation."







JILLIAN FAULKNER

Calgary, Alberta, Canada



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This year marks 14 years for me as a professional portrait photographer. Since launching my business back in 2010, I have specialized primarily in baby, child and family portrait photography. In 2021, I expanded my service offerings to include corporate headshots, personal branding and corporate event photography. I feel truly blessed that each and every day, I get to build the life of my dreams doing what I love most.

What were some of your highlights or standout moments as an ambassador this year?

I had a photographer attend one of my NAPCP gatherings this past year that was hesitant at first to join due to a poor experience with another photographer group. I received a personal note from her after the gathering telling me that she was happy she came because I had created a welcoming and comfortable environment where she truly felt a sense of belonging. Her comments meant so much to me and reinforced why I think the Ambassador program is so important. We need to support one another more in our photography journeys.

If you were an Ambassador prior to 2024 as well, how has your role as an ambassador evolved over the years?

While I've only been an Ambassador for the past two years, I have found that the longer I continue in this role, the more the photographers in my local area want to get involved and be a part of the NAPCP community. The NAPCP gatherings are always a great opportunity for me to share all the benefits that our association has to offer but these gatherings are so much more than that. Every photographer attending – including myself – finds opportunities to share, learn and grow from each other.









I am the owner and photographer behind Sacred Sage Photography, based out of Albuquerque, New Mexico. I consider myself to be a storytelling photographer for families, couples and brands. I have a wonderful husband and beautiful son who support this amazing dream of being a professional photographer.

What were some of your highlights or standout moments as an ambassador this year?

Each year presents new amazing highlights with being an Ambassador for NAPCP, but 2024 definitely stands out as one of the most memorable! I had the incredible honor of hosting the very first Ambassador hosted retreat right here in New Mexico for an incredible group of our members! It wasn't just one of my greatest moments with napcp, but also my career!

How has interacting with other photographers and creatives within the association shaped your journey this year?

The ability to have a platform such as NAPCP to interact and inspire other creatives and photographers is so incredible and meaningful! This role has helped place me in a leadership position, and has given me the courage to step out of my comfort zone and begin mentoring and teaching. This role has absolutely shaped my ability to move forward in that capacity!



"If you have a calling to bring community together, to lift people up and be a source of support and inspiration, then I would absolutely look at applying to be a NAPCP Ambassador!"







JULIE THOMAS WAGNER

Puyallup, Washington



With over two decades of experience in photography, Julie is the creative force behind The Newborn Artist. Based in the heart of downtown Tacoma, Julie specializes in capturing timeless, high-quality newborn portraits that families cherish for generations. Known for her expertise and passion, she combines technical skill with a unique artistic vision to create stunning custom artwork. At The Newborn Artist, Julie provides an unmatched, personalized experience, offering professional wall art, albums and print collections to help families beautifully preserve their most precious memories. In her spare time, she is a worship pastor and owns a branding agency, with a strong background in the tech industry.

What new skills or techniques did you learn this year through your ambassadorship?

This year as a NAPCP Ambassador, I enhanced my collaboration skills by working closely with fellow photographers and industry professionals. I learned the importance of fostering open communication and creating a supportive environment to inspire collective growth. Additionally, I developed stronger project management techniques, particularly in organizing group initiatives and events. I also expanded my creative approach, incorporating new lighting techniques and post-processing methods shared within the NAPCP community, which have further elevated the quality of my work. These experiences have sharpened my ability to collaborate effectively and push the boundaries of my craft.

What have been some of the most significant changes you've noticed in the photography industry or community this year?

I believe my work has helped foster a sense of connection and collaboration within the photography community. By sharing insights, offering support, and engaging in meaningful conversations, I've been able to inspire others to push their creative boundaries and grow both personally and professionally. My focus on elevating the quality of our craft has encouraged a deeper commitment to artistic excellence among peers. Additionally, through initiatives and collaborative projects, I've contributed to building a more inclusive, supportive environment, helping photographers feel more empowered and confident in their journeys.



"By sharing insights, offering support, and engaging in meaningful conversations, I've been able to inspire others to push their creative boundaries and grow both personally and professionally."







Here at Kara Powell Photography, I understand the juggle of balancing work, family, slobbery kisses and everything in between. That's why I'm here to make capturing precious family moments effortless for you. I specialize in creating beautiful, heartfelt portraits that celebrate the love and connection of your entire family (even your fur baby).

My goal is to provide a stress-free photography experience tailored to your busy lifestyle. Whether it's scheduling a session that fits seamlessly into your calendar or creating a relaxed atmosphere where you and Fido can truly be yourselves, I'm here to make the process easy and enjoyable for you and your family. My passion lies in crafting authentic and emotive portraits that reflect the unique personalities and connections within your family.

What have been some of the most significant changes you've noticed in the photography industry or community this year?

The photography industry is an ever evolving place. I have been full time since 2009 and every few years I have to reinvent myself. I guess the only constant is change. This is why I love going to conference to see what the new thing is. AI is super new right now. The amount of time AI has saved me is amazing. Especially in editing, I love it.

How has interacting with other photographers and creatives within the association shaped your journey this year?

My meetups were the high points of my year. It is a always a good day when you can take a break from the regularly scheduled things and find like minded friends to slow down with. I love when I get to have coffee or lunch with photographer friends. It is always amazing how similar or struggles, highs/lows, etc. are. Even when I think I don't have time for such meetups; I force myself to go. I always feel better afterwards.



"Being an Ambassador is a great way to meet fellow photographers in your area. And a great way to learn more about photography in general."







Providing clients with customized sessions tailored to their specific needs along with high-quality images and beautiful heirloom products that they will cherish for years to come is my main goal as the owner and operator of KBG Photography. KBG Photography was started in the Summer of 2014, specializing in newborns and families primarily through their little one's first year. Most of our sessions are held in our light and airy home studio; however, our clients also have an option of at-home newborn/milestone sessions, as well as various outdoor locations for family portraits.

What were some of your highlights or standout moments as an ambassador this year?

Planning our spring Gathering and having the opportunity to meet some really special people as well as visit with old friends that I don't get to see often enough was a highlight of my time as an ambassador this year. I am a teacher by way of college degree (I actually have a masters degree in Elementary Education and taught first grade before having children of my own), so getting to host a *somewhat-educational* photo walk on the Beltline with veteran photographers as well as total newbies to the art in our group was really interesting. I loved the creativity and encouragement that was passed around, and the enthusiasm towards our "lesson" really warmed my teacher heart.

Another consistent highlight of NAPCP, especially being on the ambassador side this year, is the Inspired Gallery Event. Seeing all of the breathtakingly gorgeous prints fill the walls of Alice Park Studios never disappoints It is such a fun time to get to know other NAPCP members and their families, as well as to get inspiration and ideas from all of the beautiful art.



"Technology and me are not usually friends, but I had to expand the event-planning, invitation-creating side of my brain to learn a new system that we used as ambassadors to invite the public to our gatherings."







I am a family and underwater photographer on the Space Coast in Florida. I strive to artfully capture my clients and preserve their memories and loving connections and help them to revisit those feelings of love and joy through their images on display.

What were some of your highlights or standout moments as an ambassador this year?

Meeting and connecting with new photographers in my area is always such a joy, as is stating connected with my fellow local NAPCPeeps. This year, I met a photographer who mostly has sold art prints of landscapes and night photography and was starting a new project involving people and opening a studio space and we brainstormed solutions to some of the questions he had. I really enjoy helping fellow photographers and putting community over competition.

Looking back, what advice would you give to someone who would like to become a NAPCP Ambassador in the future?

Don't give up if you have a hard time getting people to show up at gatherings. Make connections with fellow photographers in your area throughout the year and reach out individually to invite them. Sometimes the date/time you select may still not line up for everyone, but just keep trying and showing up.

What are your personal goals for the coming year as a photographer?

I had to pull back some from my business in 2024 due to some family circumstances so I'm looking forward to getting back into it in this coming year and continuing to book more underwater sessions. I also want to carve out time to do a personal project as well.



"Meeting and connecting with new photographers in my area is always such a joy, as is stating connected with my fellow local NAPCPeeps."







KRISTI FOREMAN

Rapid City, South Dakota



CONTACT KRISTI: Picture Perfect Portraits | pictureperfectportraits@gmail.com pictureperfectportraits.biz | @pictureperfectportraits.kristi | /pictureperfectportraits.kristi I have been doing photography for over 10 years. After Covid in 2020, it made me really think about a few things & one of those was always wanting to open a studio. In 2021 after things calmed down a little, I decided it was time & I am so happy I did! I primarily use my studio for a more boutique style of maternity session, newborn sessions & headshots. All my other sessions I typically do outside as I love outdoor sessions for children, families, seniors, couples and pets.

What impact do you feel your work has had on the photography community or the association?

I stepped out of my comfort zone a little bit this year & submitted a few pictures for contests through NAPCP. My images made it to the Top 100 and my landscape images ended up winning 1st and 2nd place (still in shock)!

What have been some of the most significant changes you've noticed in the photography industry or community this year?

I think a big challenge in photography is sometimes trying to stand out when there are lots of new photographers in the area with so many different price points/levels of skill.. I do believe there is plenty of work & enjoy working with the people that book me.

Another challenge is the work/family balance & making sure I'm not missing out on the important things as that is one of the reasons I quit my full time job was to raise my family.

How has interacting with other photographers and creatives within the association shaped your journey this year?

It's just nice to have that connection to other photographers and knowing they share the same positives and challenges of photography. Also being able to ask questions and get help if needed without judgement.









I started my business over 12 years ago when I left my career as an architect. I photograph growing families, from maternity and newborn to milestones, kids and the whole family. I have two kids, now 15 and 13. They are my biggest inspiration for launching my self-esteem-building portraits for kids, which has become one of my favorite sessions to photograph. Watching these kids transform and get excited during the session, and then even more when they see the images, is the most amazing thing.

What have been some of the most significant changes you've noticed in the photography industry or community this year?

This year was really hard for a lot of photographers. I think pivoting and thinking outside the box has been important to keep moving forward. AI has also grown exponentially this past year, and I have seen many photographers use it as a tool for some amazing things!

What are your personal goals for the coming year as a photographer?

I am officially launching my self-esteem-building portrait line, "Dream Catchers", and I really want to focus on these kids and help them see how amazing they really are. I have a couple of exciting portrait events planned to tie in with this, and I will continue to push my creative boundaries even further.









LENA ANTARAMIAN

Ridgewood, New Jersey



CONTACT LENA: Live Love Laugh Photos | lena@livelovelaughphotos.com | @livelovelaughphotosnj | /LiveLoveLaughPhotos

I am an award-winning photographer and the owner of Live Love Laugh Photos. I am known for lifestyle family photography with a fine art touch. While on location sessions are what I am most know for, I do have a boutique photography studio where I offer studio portraits and headshots.

My studio is located in Rigdewood, New Jersey. In 2024 I was named NAPCP's Photographer of the Year, which has been a highlight of my professional career!

What were some of your highlights or standout moments as an ambassador this year?

Meeting new photographers, sharing my love of NAPCP with them and seeing them join this community and participate in photography competitions

What are your personal goals for the coming year as a photographer?

Being an ambassador is rewarding - this is why I do it year after year. You get to represent this great organization, provide feedback to the leadership (and help shape the Ambassador program), establish yourself in a position of leadership with other photographers. But it also a bit of a time commitment - you need to be consistent and deliberate in growing 'your community' and getting people to attend NAPCP meetings.

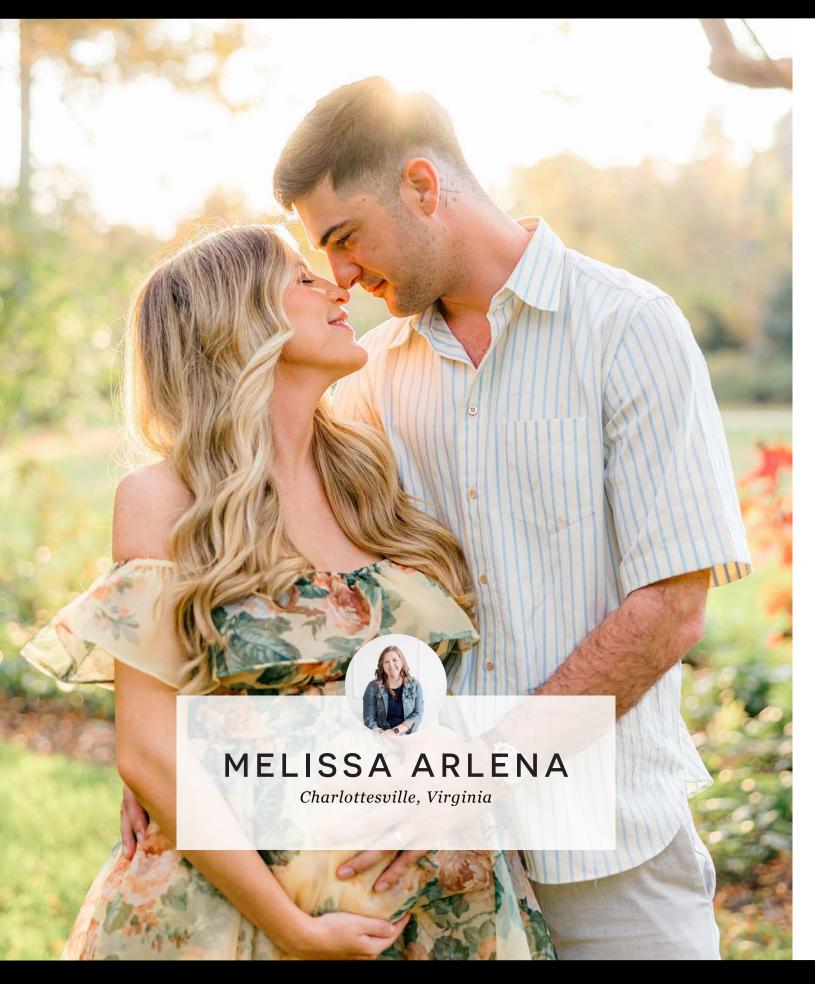






"Being an ambassador is rewarding this is why I do it year after year. You
get to represent this great organization,
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help shape the Ambassador program),
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leadership with other photographers."





Hello I'm Melissa Arlena a lifestyle newborn photographer serving Charlottesville and Richmond Virginia plus the surrounding areas. I started my business 16 years ago photographing weddings and through the years have moved over to photographing expecting mothers, babies and families. I love seeing my clients year after year and watching their babies grow up!

What were some of your highlights or standout moments as an ambassador this year?

It was really nice to get out and connect with new people in my area! I'm new to Charlottesville so it gave me a good excuse to get out of the house and meet some new faces!

What are your personal goals for the coming year as a photographer?

I'm excited to be settling in our new area and booking membership clients again. I love seeing all the babies grow up and getting to take their photos year after year!









NICKI LUCAS

West Palm Beach, Florida



My Name is Nicki and I have been a photographer for 25 years. I am the mom to two boys 18 and 25 and a very proud recent "MiMi" to a grandson. I have always loved Babies and children and when I was in photography school, I knew I wanted to specializes in that genre of photography. I was blessed to work with an amazing photographer while in school as her assistant and a few years later I ended updating over her business as she transitioned into a new career. I learned photography shooting film and developing in the darkroom-I still use many of the fundamentals taught to me all those years ago today. I do have a brick and mortar studio but I specialize in In-home newborn sessions-I take everything to the home and set up the studio there so the new parents don't have to leave their house. I am so blessed to have been able to do what I love for the last 25 years. I have clients who I have photographed as newborns who now have babies that I have also photographed.... It's amazing.

What were some of your highlights or standout moments as an ambassador this year?

This year I have really loved the meet-ups. I have met several local photographers who are new and also some seasoned professionals. I have really enjoyed chatting with them, getting to know them and also helping them when I can.

What are your personal goals for the coming year as a photographer?

Some personal goals for myself this coming year are to make some more new connections within the industry. I have done some mentoring and small workshops in the past and I would love to branch out with that more. I am finding I really love teaching and sharing from my experience.



"I have done some mentoring and small workshops in the past and I would love to branch out with that more. I am finding I really love teaching and sharing from my experience."







I am a photographer and a musician along with other hats I juggle. The photographer in me is how my business exists. I love photography and have been one, professionally, since 2000, and as a hobby from 1975 - 2000. That's a long time to be able to do something I enjoy so much. It started as a hobby...well, a passion, and turned into a business, and of that, I am very grateful.

I am a mom of four adult children, a mother-in-law to three, a grandmother to six and a wife to one, my favorite one. Well... My only one for 51 years, now. We were just kids when we married and have been blessed. I have been a Navy wife in my lifetime and that is part of how I became the determined person I am today.

What were some of your highlights or standout moments as an ambassador this year?

Our spring meet-up was one of my favorites. I offered a senior session with my senior 2025 granddaughter as the senior, and we had a blast. The attendees were so much fun and I loved seeing/hearing all of their perspectives. The resulting images were just as varied as their personalities though we were shooting the same subject. I love that aspect about photography. No two people see the same subject the same.

What have been some of the most significant changes you've noticed in the photography industry or community this year?

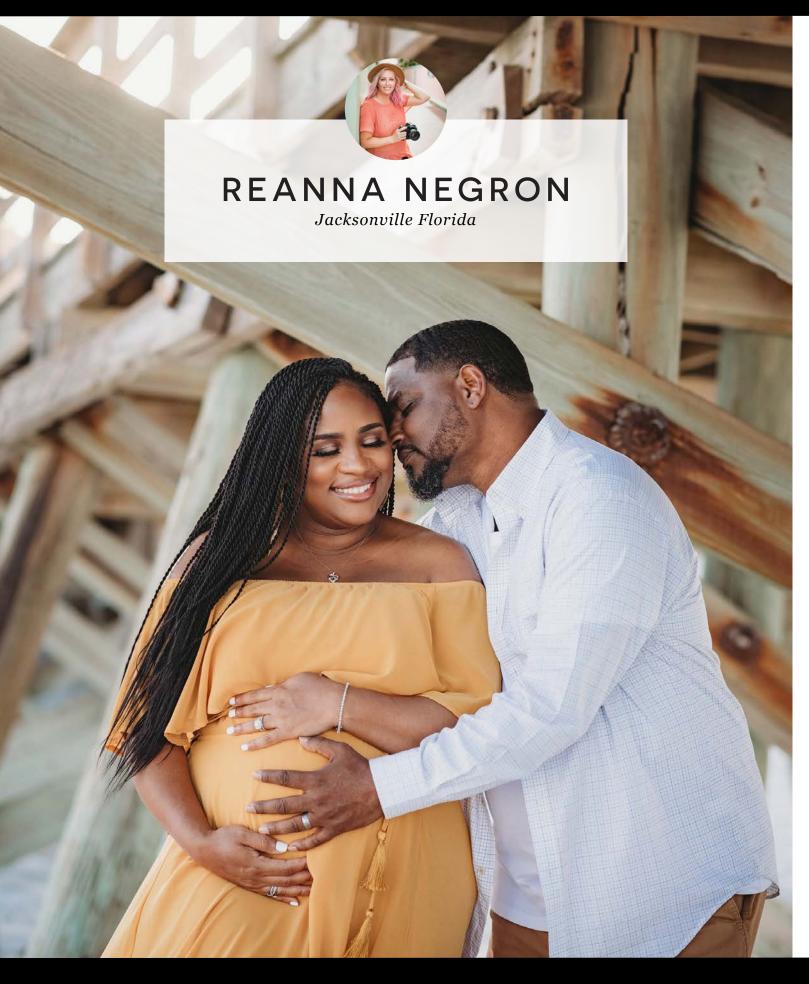
I have noticed, among our photographers in NAPCP, that the quality of work has definitely improved. The work in this organization was good work when I joined many years ago, but I am astounded by the amazing works being produced in today's NAPCP membership. The editing styles, the shooting styles... all so much more creative (and the past was creative --it's just even more noticeable now).



"The work in this organization was good work when I joined many years ago, but I am astounded by the amazing works being produced in today's NAPCP membership."







I am a family photographer serving Jacksonville and surrounding areas of Northeast Florida. I have 10+ years experience specializing in family and children of all ages. My sessions are a one of a kind experience and I love documenting the more authentic moments that reflect each families personalities. I am a wife and mom of 2 adult sons (19 & 23) which is a whole different season of motherhood that I am slowly learning how to operate lol I enjoy spending time with my family, going to the beach or springs, chasing sunsets and weekend adventures with hubby. we also recently moved from the city to a farm and we are so excited to start new memories here.

If you were an Ambassador prior to 2024 as well, how has your role as an ambassador evolved over the years?

It has honestly kept me committed and the energy from the community is so supportive. Let's face it sometimes we get burnt out and overstimulated and want to just throw the towel in but keeping the ambass ador title makes me feel proud and $\,$ dedicated to sharing NAPCP's mission. 2024 was a little hectic with us moving so my focus wasn't 100% but I am ready to get back to it.

Collaborating on the Gatherings and exchanging ideas with other photographers has really helped to expand my own visions and also reinforced the power of collaboration with in the industry.

What are your personal goals for the coming year as a photographer?

Work more on my SEO for my website and also more in person networking. Taking it back a little "old school" and meeting face to face and showing up for the local community.



"Becoming an Ambassador has been such an exciting opportunity to share your passion and connect with like minded creatives."







I started making photos at a young age when my grandmother gifted me a camera. Decades later I became a mom and began photographing with intention to freeze all the large and small moments of my children's lives. Now I do this for my clients! As a full-service photographer, I do the heavy lifting from planning clients' sessions to helping them select beautiful, printed artwork for display in their homes. I give clients permission to let go of doing while I mind the details and bring their creative vision to life. I offer assistance in curating the perfect camera-ready wardrobe and successfully motivate the occasional reluctant partner or kiddo. My sessions are relaxed, playful and customized to every family's current season of life. When our time together is completed, clients have beautiful, heirloom artwork of their time together and no to-do list.

What have been some of the most significant changes you've noticed in the photography industry or community this year?

There continues to be a growing push for cheap, cheap, cheap. So many people do not respect our profession and I feel many photographers self sabotage. Many are willing to take a client for unsustainable prices and let the clients dictate the rate. No other profession does this! I feel there needs to be more education to other photographers about how this is hurting our industry.

What are your personal goals for the coming year as a photographer?

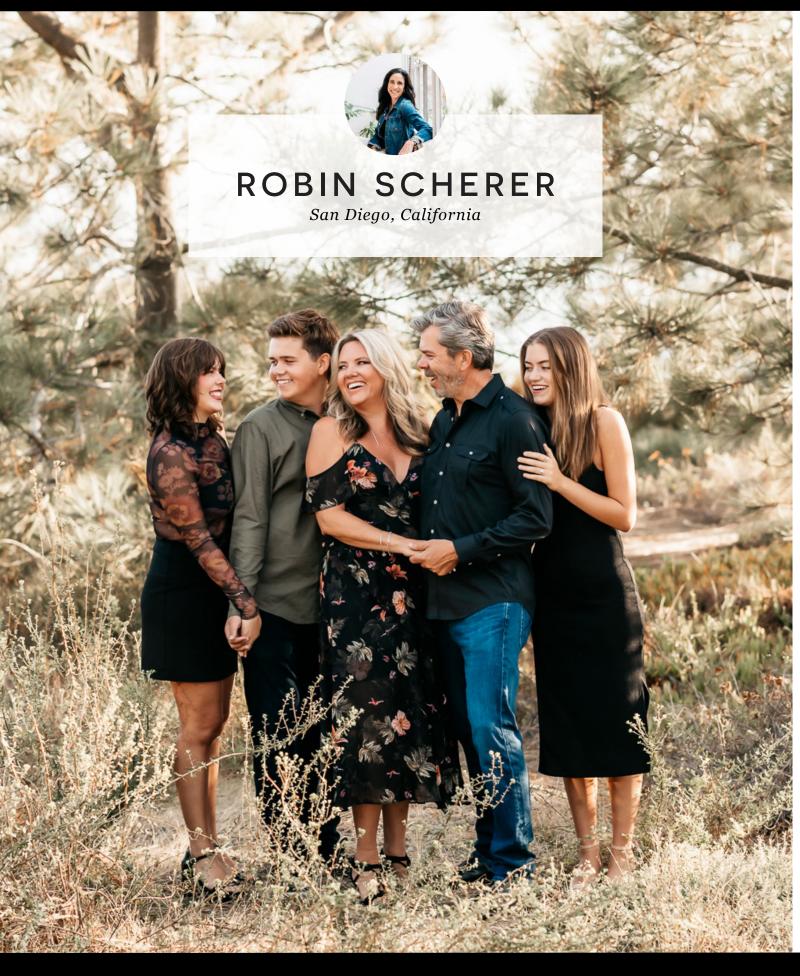
Launching my new IPS business model. Running a Google ad campaign to support my business shift. Continuing to learn OCF.











My name is Robyn Scherer and I have been photographing high school and college seniors as well as families for almost 10 years here in San Diego! I also am the senior photographer at a local, all girls high school and have been creating their senior images for almost 10 years as well. I love my work and feel blessed to be invited by families and seniors to create their images that will be memories for them to hold onto for years to come.

Even though I am a veteran photographer, I still engage in learning every year to improve my skills whether it be in composition, posing, editing, etc. so that my clients are always getting the best version of me.

In addition, I am incredibly honored to be an Ambassador for NAPCP. I love the community and all that it has to offer. I have made a few friends in my area all because NAPCP and I am forever grateful!

What were some of your highlights or standout moments as an ambassador this year?

A hightlight this year was a meet up we had at Kim Belverud's new studio in downtown. I was able to meet another San Diego photographer, see Kim's new space and just deepen my NAPCP friendships.

What are your personal goals for the coming year as a photographer?

My personal goals for 2025 are to be more involved in magazine shoots as I love the creatives that work on those shoots. It's really fun to collaborate with them. I would also like to grow the NAPCP community here in San Diego by having a few more events and trying to be creative as to how we can attract more attendance to the meetings.



"My personal goals for 2025 are to be more involved in magazine shoots as I love the creatives that work on those shoots. It's really fun to collaborate with them."







Natural light photographer for families with a casual, candid feel.

What were some of your highlights or standout moments as an ambassador this year?

I loved how we've grown our reach and there are a lot of new photographers just starting out. We're able to guide them and help our industry better educate themselves.

If you were an Ambassador prior to 2024 as well, how has your role as an ambassador evolved over the years?

I feel like the more years I'm in business, the more I have to share. I've also, with the help of Emily, been able to have a better space that more photographers are willing to meet.

How has interacting with other photographers and creatives within the association shaped your journey this year?

I love being put in more of a leadership role. Everyone always has room for more growth and learning but I've welcomed the change this year to be able to teach more.

What are your personal goals for the coming year as a photographer?

I'm hoping to be able to get more clients for late summer sessions. I put the word out last year and think more clients are starting to get the picture!



"Everyone always has room for more growth and learning, but I've welcomed the change this year to be able to teach more."







SHELBY FINKELSTEIN

Orlando, Florida



Simply Shelby Photography is an award winning, on-location boutique portrait studio specializing in modern children, families and Seniors. Owner and photographer, Shelby Finkelstein, uses only natural light and believes in taking a more "lifestyle" approach to her photography. Shelby's style is PERFECTLY IMPERFECT. Being a mother of three has inspired her playful style and ability to connect with her subjects. Simply Shelby Photography was established in 2009. Shelby is an NAPCP Master Family Photographer, Member and Ambassador as well as an active member of the Professional Photographers of America.

If you were an Ambassador prior to 2024 as well, how has your role as an ambassador evolved over the years?

I have noticed over the years as Ambassador that my role has evolved from tips and practice with technique to more discussion on sales and strategy. We discuss everything from products to IPS and stories of what has worked and what has not. It also helps to share personal struggles that may be impacting our work and how we can overcome them. These conversations as incredibly meaningful as we all continue to grow both personally and professionally.

What were your personal goals for this past year?

This year my personal goal was to branch out with my love of travel and my love for photography to create a travel site/ blog where I could share breathtaking images, travel tips and most importantly, inspiration to others to create lasting memories through travel and adventure. My first step was to enter my landscape images into the NAPCP Inspired Image competition where I placed 3rd and received Honorable Mention!





"Don't hesitate to take on the leadership role of Ambassador.

The feeling you get when you look around at your gatherings and realize you have helped to create and foster friendship within your local photography community is so rewarding! As photographers, we may have employees or we may work alone, but now in Orlando, we have a group of women who have become not just a sounding board for each other or a support system but they have also become friends."





I am a fine art portrait photographer in Asheville, NC. I mainly photograph families and seniors, but I really love to do custom creative portraits for my clients and family. I am an editing nerd and really love to see how far I can push myself creatively with editing tools.

What were some of your highlights or standout moments as an ambassador this year?

A highlight for me as an ambassador is gaining a community of like minded individuals and business owners to lean on. There are so many photography groups out there with all sorts of "advice" for other photographers. The NAPCP Ambassador group was such a great place to ask questions and get feedback on business thoughts and ideas. The connections in this group are invaluable.

What are your personal goals for the coming year as a photographer?

This upcoming year I really want to try and niche down to seniors and families and really streamline my process and workflows. Learning about other photographer's processes through the NAPCP has really helped me learn new ways to cut down on my time editing so I can focus on other areas of my business.



"The NAPCP Ambassador group was such a great place to ask questions and get feedback on business thoughts and ideas. The connections in this group are invaluable."







CAPTURING CONFIDENCE

A Photographer's Guide to Empowering Kids

AN ARTICLE BY KRISTIN MERCK

Children today navigate challenges that constantly test their self-worth. Social media platforms expose them to constant comparison and unrealistic standards. A 2022 JAMA Pediatrics study revealed a troubling correlation between increased social media use and diminished self-esteem among children aged 10-14. Additionally, with one in five students experiencing bullying, many kids struggle daily with anxiety, depression, and negative self-image. And according to the Dove Self-Esteem Project, 7 out of 10 girls believe they are not good enough or do not measure up in some way.

I remembered my own experiences at that age and when I saw my two kids' social struggles begin at 10 and 12, I knew I wanted to make a difference. I started to notice how kids their age transformed when in front of the camera and again how they reacted when I went to hang a

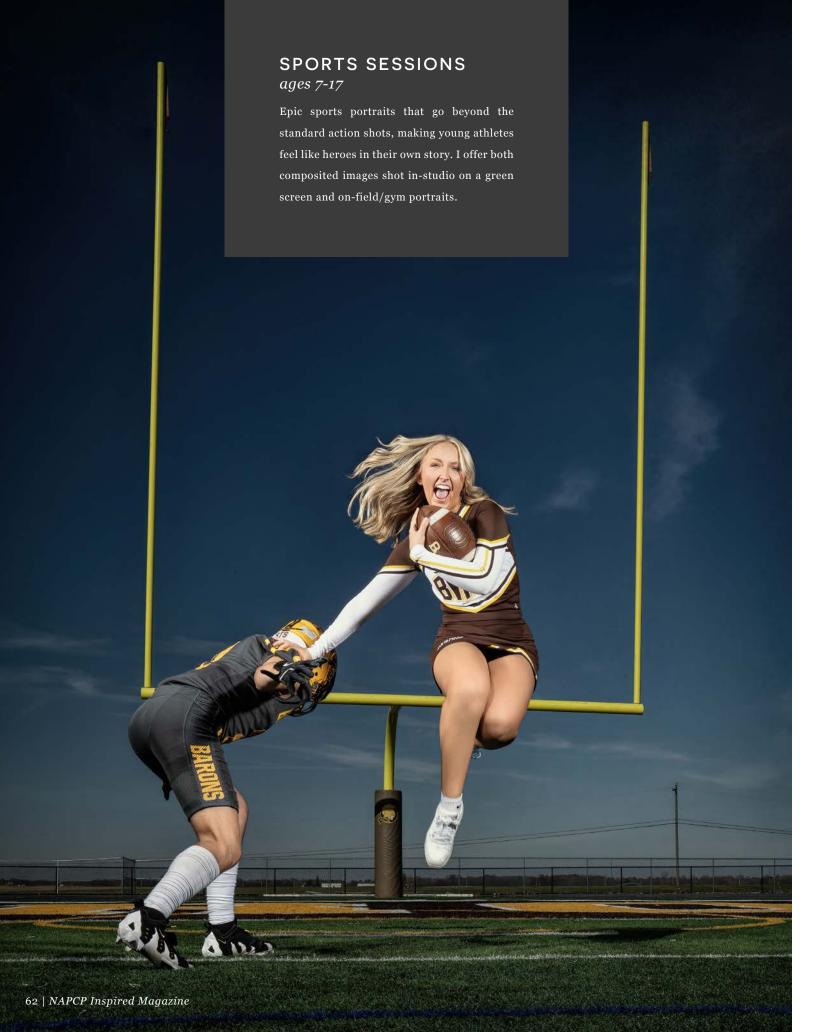
portrait in their home or deliver an album from their session. I know my own kids love to go through our albums, both printed and online (they still ask almost daily to see my Facebook memories). It brings me so much joy to be able to give this feeling to them: a feeling of pride and joy.

This led to the creation of "Dream Catchers by Kristin Merck Photography", a portrait experience designed to celebrate children's individuality and remind them of their unique strengths. Through these sessions, kids not only see themselves as beautiful and capable but also begin to believe it. I can see how proud they are to share a talent with me and how they come alive and out of their shells during the sessions. Each Dream Catchers session is tailored to highlight a different age and/or interest:



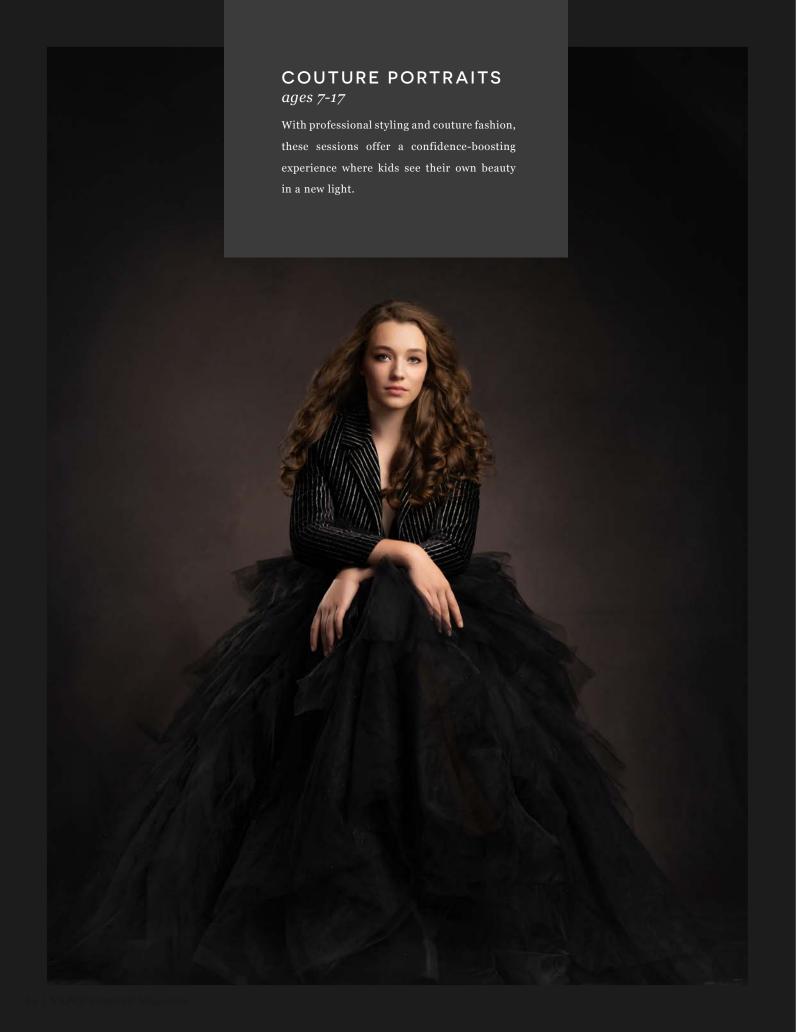




















TWEEN PORTRAITS ages 8-12

Designed specifically for tweens, these sessions celebrate their hobbies, talents, and passions, helping them embrace what makes them unique. These are especially wonderful for kids who might be more reserved and not into sports, and I love the creativity that comes out of them!

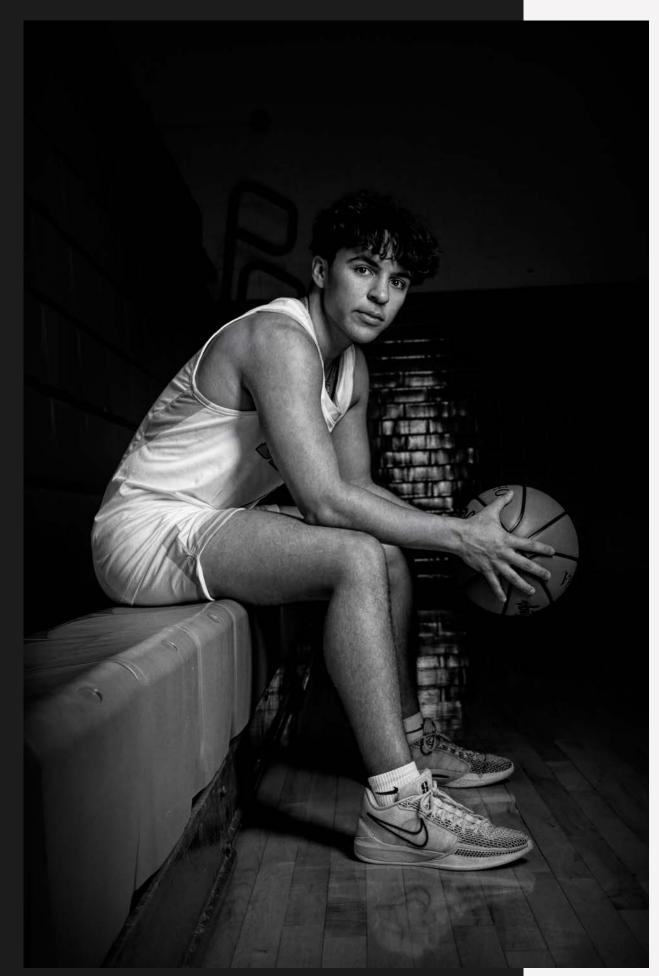






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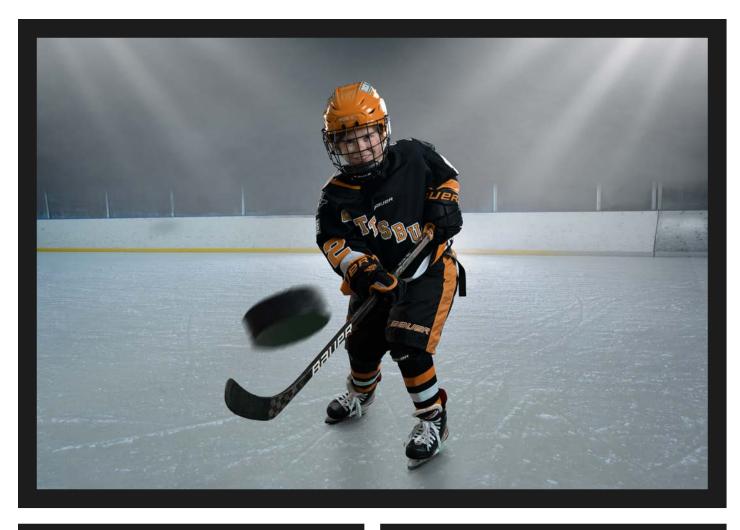


Research by Dr. David Krauss shows that displaying portraits in the home strengthens a child's sense of belonging and self-worth. This becomes particularly crucial during adolescence, when children are forming their identity and self-concept. I love it when the kids say "I want that one for my room" and how excited they are to see their portraits hanging on the wall.

I start the portrait process with a questionnaire for both parents and kids to fill out, followed by an in-person consultation to meet the parents and the kids for every session, no exceptions. It also lets them see the studio, get to know me, try on clothing from my client closet (if applicable), and see all of the products firsthand. This process, while it may feel like an extra or unnecessary step, really puts them at ease and lets us put together a plan for the session and the end goal, whether that's wall portraits (and which walls), an album, and/or a few prints for gifts and keepsakes. The day of the session, everyone shows up relaxed and confident in the process and when we sit down together at the ordering appointment, everyone is on the same page and they are just excited to see and select their images.

Beyond the session itself, I'm working to provide online and local resources for parents and kids, including tools on self-esteem, bullying, and mental health. I am also working to partner with local professionals to be guest bloggers and provide information on issues they see and how they can be helped. Some of the professionals I am talking with include therapists, athletic trainers and coaches, teachers, nutritionists and more. I also plan to start a program that will offer complimentary sessions to deserving kids to try and reach and help as many kids as I can. I am still developing this program, but in the past I put out a call out for nominations for kids who either were experiencing difficulties themselves and really needed a boost, or have gone above and beyond to help someone else.









I always ask for feedback and testimonials (and I have brief questionnaires for both the kids and parents) so that I know what I'm doing right and what I can improve on.

Recently, after a specialty stylized session, a mom sent me this email and it brought me to tears:

She absolutely had a wonderful time and talked about it for days. You truly gave her so much confidence and I am so grateful. We are so thankful to have met and found you. What I didn't tell you is that she spent her 7th grade year in a remote school because she was bullied so horribly (including a boy threatening to bring a gun to school to shoot her) that she really fell into severe social anxiety with kids her age and depression. We worked very hard to get her back on track and she was able to go back to in person school in 8th grade. Modeling has always made her feel confident and like she isn't an outsider looking in. Thank you for giving her that opportunity. We appreciate your beautiful art but also how you give these young people confidence and make them realize how beautiful they truly are.

As professional photographers, we have a unique opportunity to make an impact on these kids during some of their most vulnerable years. What we do behind the lens can be transformative. Every portrait session is an opportunity to counter negative messages and reinforce positive self-image. By approaching our work with this understanding, we can use our skills to make a lasting positive impact on the next generation.

featured artist



Kristin Merck

Business: Kristin Merck Photography
Website: kristinmerckphotography.com
Instagram: @kmerckphoto

MEMBER



Congratulations, Valerie!



VALERIE EIDSON
Valerie Eidson Photography

"NAPCP is thrilled to honor and celebrate Valerie Eidson as our 2024 Photographer of the Year. A Master Photographer and award-winning talent, Valerie has long exemplified the heart and soul of the NAPCP community. As a dedicated Ambassador, she has served selflessly, not only sharing her artistic gifts but also mentoring, teaching and inspiring countless photographers along the way. Valerie's passion for her craft and her unwavering commitment to uplifting others set her apart as a true leader and role model. Her artistry, dedication, and generosity of spirit are unparalleled, and we are beyond proud to celebrate her extraordinary accomplishments. Congratulations, Valerie—your impact on this community and the world of photography is immeasurable, and this recognition is so richly deserved."

- Alice & Kyu Park, Founders of NAPCP



INSPIRED MOODY JUNE 2025

NAPCP's monthly Inspired themes celebrate outstanding images from members and non-members, on an ongoing basis. We can't wait to see your "moody" images for our upcoming issue in June. These monthly themes aim to give professional photographers ample opportunities to show off their work and have it published in print! Visit napcp.com/contribute-to-our-magazine for more information on how to submit.

Submissions Close June 1st





Gear:

Canon ESO R6 | 24-70mm

Settings:

f/2.8 | 1/1000 | ISO 400

Business:

Purple Hippo Photography

Website:

purplehippophotography.com

In stagram:

@purplehippophotography

Janet Chrysakis

In this reflective moment I wanted to capture the beauty of family togetherness and the gorgeous sunset. At this moment photography becomes more than documentation. It's a meditation on transience—how quickly joy moves, how swiftly waves reshape our memories, how light can transform the ordinary into the extraordinary.



Kristin Bourg

Gear:

Canon 35mm

Settings:

f/3.5 | 1/400 | ISO 1000

Business:

K-Rae Images

Website:

kraeimages.com

Instagram:

@dallasbirthphotographer

Ann Marie Grocholski

Gear:

Canon R6 MarkII | 35mm

Settings:

f/2 | 1/320 | ISO 400

Business:

AMG Photography

Website:

amg-photos.com

Instagram:

@annmariegrocholski



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Once a year my husband and I go to our "happy place" in the Winter. We don't always get lucky with a beautiful snow fall, but this trip we did and when I saw how still the lake was along with the beautiful reflection and gray sky I had a feeling this would be an image I would cherish forever.

Gear:

Canon R5 | 50mm

Settings:

f/5.6 | 1/1000 | ISO 1250

Business:

Rhiannon Livardo Photography

Website:

rhiannonlivardo.co

Instagram:

@rhiannonlivardophotography



Nikon Z8 | 14-30mm

Settings:

f/5.6 | 1/200 | ISO 100

Business:

Corey Flint Photography

Website:

coreyflint.com

In stagram:

@coreyflintphoto



Corey Nimmer

I took this of my wife and daughter on Plum Island last summer. I wanted to capture the feeling of looking forward to our new addition while savoring life as a family of three, and thought the reflection in one of the tide pools was a nice way to do that.





Leah Barad

Gear:

Canon 5D Mark IV | 40mm

Settings:

f/3.5 | 1/500 | ISO 500

Business:

LeahB Photography LLC

Website:

leahb.com

Instagram:

@leahbphotos

Laura Tannenbaum

Most people probably don't want the changing table photographed, but I think it captures the reality of what it's like to bring a newborn home and the care parents take in raising their baby. Adding a little romance by having a sweet kiss exchanged while parents stand in front of the mirror hanging over the changing table is my way of creating a lil bit of beauty out of the ordinary.

Gear:

Canon R6 | 35mm

Settings:

f/2.8 | 1/400 | ISO 1250

Business:

Oh, Tannenbaum Photography

Website:

ohtan nen baum photos.com

Instagram:

@ohtannenbaumphotos

Lindsay Herkert MEMBER

Business: Gear:

Canon 5D Mark II | 50mm Lindsay Herkert Photo Co

Settings: Email:

f/2.8 | 1/250 | ISO 1000 hello@lindsayherkert.com Website:

lindsayherkert.com

Instagram:

@lindsay.herkert

This was such a fun maternity session in downtown Austin. Mama-to-be brought multiple outfit changes and when she put on the pop of red I knew I wanted to shoot her next to the cool tone of the windows. The reflection was an added bonus and we both immediately leaned into it.

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— NEWBORN —

SUBMIT YOUR PORTFOLIO MAY 5TH - MAY 19TH



NAPCP is dedicated to supporting our members in achieving their professional goals, and we're thrilled to see you take the next step on your photography journey by becoming certified in the newborn category! Earning your Master Photographer Certification in Newborn Photography will provide you with the credibility needed to attract and retain clients, while also unlocking a wealth of professional opportunities. Whether you're looking to raise your pricing or expand your portfolio to include more clients, this certification will serve as a key step toward making that a reality.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Step 1 - Submit a Portfolio of 25 Images

Submit a portfolio of 25 images. While each artist's style should be apparent, the portfolio should be diverse in nature with different scenes, subjects, poses and expressions. The objective is to demonstrate the artist's skill and mastery of shooting in a variety of different settings and situations, exhibiting mastery of the specific niché of newborn photography.

Step 2 - Complete and Pass the Newborn Certification Course

In order to ensure that all of our Newborn Master Photographers are conducting business safely and understand the special needs of their littlest clients, our Newborn Master Photographer Certification requires an additional step and all applicants are required to complete and pass a short Newborn Master Certification Course after submitting their portfolio. You will only be asked to take the Newborn Certification Course if you pass Step 1 of certification (AKA Portfolio Review). Portfolios must be received by May 19 for consideration.

Newborn Master Photographer Certification Opens May 5th!

For more details and information on how to apply for Master Certification, log in to your NAPCP account and click on the link under "resources".



Welcome, Ambaggadong!

SAY HELLO TO THE 2025 NAPCP AMBASSADORS

A huge congratulations and warm welcome to our 2025 NAPCP Ambassadors! These incredible individuals are dedicated to building vibrant local communities of artists.

By fostering connections and sparking meaningful conversations, our Ambassadors help drive the compassionate collaboration that embodies the NAPCP vision.

Our Ambassadors will be kicking off 2025 by holding their first Gatherings April 14 - 20. Want to join in on the fun? Visit napcp.com/napcp-gatherings for event updates in your area. Need to connect sooner? Head over to napcp.com/napcp-ambassadors to get in touch with your local Ambassador to learn more about NAPCP!

Congratulations

WEEKLY FAVORITES WINNERS



JULIE HAMLIN of Sacred Sage Photography Weekly Theme - "Self Portrait"



CHARIS KAUFFMAN
of Charis Elisabeth Photography
Weekly Theme - "Winter Wonderland"

March 2025

#NAPCPINSTAFAVES



















MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

napcp.com/membership-benefits

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

members.napcp.com/napcpapplication

MARKETING MONDAYS

napcp.com/marketing-mondays

IMAGE COMPETITION

napcp.com/about-our-image-competitions

Back Cover Image by Kristin Merck of Kristin Merck Photography



EXPOSURE

There are so many ways to contribute to the NAPCP Community. Whether it's through speaking, hosting a NAPCP Getaway or Adventure, becoming a NAPCP Ambassador or even simply writing a blog article – there's an opportunity for everyone! We love giving our members a platform through which they can share their knowledge and work with the world!

WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE

For more information, please contact us at: info@napcp.com

- Contribute to Inspired Magazine
- Host a NAPCP Getaway or Adventure
- Contribute to the NAPCP Blog

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