



Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Social Distancing

The Oakwood Porch Project

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Today, we are all practicing some sort of social distancing the new coined phrase handed down by governments in countries all over the world. It means no persons should be within six feet of each other and the result has been the closing or canceling of schools, businesses, sporting events, parks, weddings, funerals and even churches can only have service if the congregation will stay in their cars for “parking lot services”. While people struggle to make ends meet from the resulting lay-offs of millions, kids and parents are stuck at home stressed and afraid. The City of Dayton has even removed all the basketball rims from parks and school practice fields to keep groups from gathering. This mandate, of course we are told, will save lives in the fight against the spread of Covid-19 which has taken 34,784 lives in the United States and 145,568 Worldwide.

While our first responders, healthcare professionals, military, researchers and volunteers are on the front lines risking all under tremendous and difficult conditions, we thank them in this fight by doing what we can to support their efforts. This story is about how a local mother who has found a way to enrich our lives but also her own by giving hope through photographs while giving back to the community. Here is Jamie’s story.



Hello everyone, I’m Jamie, a lifestyle natural light photographer, military spouse, and mom of two boys, living in Dayton, Ohio. Like most of the world, my business was drastically affected by the Coronavirus. Postponing of sessions with clients was heart-

breaking and following the stay-at-home order seemed to be torturous since we’re such an active family. After a few days I started to wonder about my fellow neighbors, most of which are young families, and what they must be going through during the pandemic.

So, I started asking myself, What could I do? How could I give back, to spread hope to my neighbors and give them a little bit of joy to look forward too? I didn’t know if people would be interested in what I had in mind and I even questioned if one person could make that much of a difference. I would soon find out.



Photo of the Highland family; Click on the photo to see Jamies slide show

After talking to my husband and fellow neighbors about my idea, I decided to use my community’s Facebook page to see if anyone would be interested in family portraits on their front porch to commemorate this crazy period in our lives. *In my post, I explained that this wouldn’t be a typical photo shoot because we needed to maintain social distancing and the proper precautions to avoid anyone getting sick.* Instead, I would break out my zoom lens and take pictures of their families from the street or sidewalk. Within minutes my phone was being blown up!

I couldn’t believe how many people were excited to be a part of what I would eventually call, ***The Oakwood Front Porch Project***, and I couldn’t wait to get started! With the tremendous number of families that wanted to be a part of the project I had to book four to five-hour long periods of back-to-back shoots, staggered every 15 minutes for seven days just to get to most of the families. Then, I’d stay up late into the night after my kids went to bed just to finish the editing.

At times it felt overwhelming but when I’d see all of those smiling faces and the amount of joy my efforts were bringing to people; it was easy to keep going. It was all worth it knowing that I was taking a little part in pulling our community together while the Coronavirus was forcing everyone apart. One of the best parts of this project was the reaction after everyone received their pictures. I was blown away by the pride they took in sharing their images, showing them off through their Facebook profiles, and writing about how thankful they were to have pictures to remember these moments as a family.

I was shocked by all of the thank you notes, reviews, and personal messages of gratitude and thankfulness that all my wonderful neighbors sent my way. I just wanted to donate my time and effort to help strengthen our community, but it was nice to see that everyone appreciated what I was doing.

Along the way, so many people asked how they could repay me, and my response every time was that this was just about giving back and spreading joy to our community during this time of uncertainty. The look on their faces was mostly disbelief. Even with the virus affecting my business, I believe that if I have the means to help, I should. I may not know their personal struggles, but I knew that I could at least do my part to help spread some joy.

When I am not behind my camera lens, I am living a very active lifestyle, wrestling with my boys, hiking, park hopping, and enjoying the outdoors. I’m a California native and feel the happiest when surrounded by my family and nature.

One of the reasons I fell in love with photography was that I love finding the beauty in life and truly enjoy meeting people. I value that genuine connection with my clients and love capturing those authentic, genuine moments, that you look back on and smile.

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