

# SEEING EYE TO EYE



Linnea Osterberg poses with her 35 mm camera, used for her black and white photography.

**At Lake Oswego Public Library, a Photographer showcases a collection of children's portraits, shot on location and capturing their true emotions.**

As reported in the Lake Oswego Review January 8, 2004  
By Staff Reporter Julie Russell, Review Photos by Vern Uyetake

Playing games of "I spy" or hide-and-go-seek and discussing anything from turtles to ballet tutus are all in a day's work for Linnea Osterberg.

That's because this 28-year-old photographer from Lake Oswego always shoots photos on location in the homes, play places and favorite parks of photography subjects that range in age from newborns to teenagers.

"I spy a boulder, and I see you have a swing set and you have a slide," says Osterberg to Michael Winchester, 4, and his brother, Blake, 3,



Linnea Osterberg works on capturing the right moment while photographing Michael and Blake Winchester of Lake Oswego.

in their Lake Oswego home on Monday. "What do you see outside right now? Is Santa Claus out there?"

Michael and Blake, an energetic pair who have been cooped up inside due to the day's chilly weather, begin chattering and searching for things to spy in their backyard. And Osterberg takes advantage of the moment to capture their natural expressions, movements and moods with her 35 millimeter Canon.

"I try to get a natural, not posed, photo of a child to show how they really look from day to day at this age," she said. "And I feel kids are more confident in the environments they know."

So Osterberg never completes photography sessions in a photography studio - instead, she meets with clients at a small office if necessary.

On location, she doesn't ask her subjects to pose, sit still, calm down or smile, but simply watches and plays with them while clicking away at photogenic moments.

In her photographs, children look relaxed or comfortable, deep in thought or playful, like they hardly know they are being photographed.

"It's hard for children to look comfortable in places where they feel uncomfortable," she said.

Osterberg, who specializes in black and white photography with natural lighting, will have a 24-photograph exhibit on display from next week to April at the Lake Oswego Public Library. Dubbed "Thoughtful Portraiture," the exhibit opens next Tuesday.

"She's got a very nice style when working with children," said Jennifer Field, a Dunthorpe resident who won a photography package by Osterberg at an auction for Riverdale School.

"She photographed my three sons, who are 14, 12 and 8, so those were a range of ages to work with. Her photography just catches their expressions, and I think she got the personalities of each one of my children," said Field.

With a master's degree in psychology, including an emphasis in child counseling, from Lewis & Clark College, Osterberg obviously uses her educational background in her current profession.

"I use the skills from that degree all the time . . . , so I rarely sit there and just tell kids to smile," she said.

Photography was Osterberg's hobby throughout college, so upon finishing graduate school, she turned her passion into a profession. Using Portland photographer Ray Bidegain as a mentor, she informally trained with him over the past few years, while also renting his darkroom. Instead of going digital, as many professional photographers have, Osterberg prefers to use film and to develop all photos in the darkroom.

A favorite photo of Osterberg's will be on display in the library exhibit next week. It shows 5 year-old Julia Bingham, whom Osterberg photographed during three different sittings, leaning against her hand. Because the child was

having difficulty relaxing, Osterberg finally played tic-tac-toe with her and was able to capture the natural shot.

As for the future, Osterberg hopes to grow her business through word of mouth and additional exhibits within the community. She'd like to volunteer to take photos of premature babies at Emanuel Hospital's neonatal intensive care unit because she feels all parents deserve to have photos of their children, whether healthy or sick.



A photo of Julia Bingham, 5, is Linnea Osterberg's favorite because it shows a natural expression.

And Osterberg, hopes her natural affinity with children will continue to make her photography sittings a positive experience rather than an intrusion into her client's lives. In fact, Osterberg, who baby-sat throughout her college years, has had requests for more than her photography skills. "I once had a client who said, "Gosh, do you baby-sit?" she said.

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