

MAGIC MOMENTS

REAL LIFE, REAL SMILES

Real Life Parenting photo shoots capture reality in the trenches.

BY CARAMIE PETROWSKY

IT'S BATH TIME in the Thompson household in Breckenridge. Two littles playfully splash Dad with water while Mom laughs hysterically at his misfortune.

Captured in black and white, the image radiates joy. That's because it's real life; and not the product of a forced photo shoot where Mom hisses through her teeth, "no fake smiles!"

Professional photographer Alisa Messeroff nabbed the image at her first-ever Real Life Parenting Session at the beginning of the year. Prior to bath time, the kids waged a popcorn war, Mom sipped a cocktail and Dad struggled to ditch his smartphone. That's not an atypical night in the Thompson household, or any modern household, really, and it's all captured in beautiful professional photos, many of which now hang in their home, garnering praise from visitors.

When Messeroff, 33, first saw the Thompson photos, she knew she was on to something with this more journalistic, tell-it-like-it-is approach. So far, it's kids (and dads) who especially love the casual way the sessions unfold. But what child wouldn't prefer a Nerf Gun war at the park instead of an hour of props and forced smiles?

"It's perfect if you just want to have fun and be yourself," said Messeroff, who really digs in deep with clients to find out what they like to do as a family and where their spirits shine.

The sessions are slowly catching on. Messeroff advises parents to try it at least once.

"Life is short," she reminds them. "You should capture the memories that really make your family you."

It was a similar craving for real life that prompted Messeroff to leave New York City and her corporate position at Time, Inc. back in 2011. She worked in the licensing and syndication department for the international publications as the "middle man" between international countries and photographers. Seeing beautiful images from around the world spurred a desire to see the world and so she and her husband traded their jobs in for a little globetrotting.

Over the course of two-and-a-half years, the couple lived in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Fiji, Australia, New Zealand and Indonesia. All the while Messeroff's photography skills steadily improved as she taught herself how to use the camera she'd purchased before leaving the United States. Upon their return to New York City, Messeroff made a list of her favorite things. New-



borns, children and photography topped the list. She launched Alisa Messeroff Photography in August 2014, just three months before she and her husband Mike moved to Breckenridge.

"The plan was to only be here for a ski season but we both fell in love," she said. "I am just so absolutely grateful to be able to do what I love and make a living from it."

While Messeroff started as a landscape photographer documenting her travels, she now focuses her lens on people; specializing in maternity, newborn, children, family and senior photography.

Looking back, her love for children manifested early. From age 7 to 14, she spent nearly every day after school at her neighbor's in-home daycare center.

Unfortunately, due to health issues, it's unlikely Messeroff and her husband will have their own children. Her love for littles is so strong, however, she wanted to spend much of her professional life documenting their innocence.

"There is something very special about being able to capture the beauty of new life," she said. "Their tiny toes, little hands, soft skin; just thinking about it makes me smile."

And what about that bath time splash time photo? It went on to win 11th place out of more than 4,300 entries in the Shoot & Share contest in the category "That Just Happened," landing a spot in *Shoot & Share Magazine's* summer 2017 edition.

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