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HELPING OUT IN A FLASH

Group aids immigrant family by taking kids' photos to send to relatives

BY JOYCE SHELBY

IN THE SPIRIT of the holidays, Nihal Soliman received a priceless gift to send her family members in Egypt — pictures of her little children.

The Bay Parkway Photo Group recently had a photo session with Mohamed, 4; Samah, 3, and Sama, 8 months — and then delivered the color pictures to the Soliman family, free of charge.

"This is beautiful. We really appreciate this. We couldn't afford to have the pictures taken. It's too expensive," said Soliman, a full-time wife and mom of six, who lives in Bay Ridge. Her husband works in food services at a Manhattan hotel.

The Solimans immigrated four years ago.

Relatives back home haven't seen the youngest children. "These are their first pictures," Soliman said.

The photographers in the Bay Parkway Photo Group attend Block Institute in Gravesend, a center for adults with developmental disabilities.

Last fall, the photo group received a \$500 grant from the New York Adult Day Service Providers to do a community-based project. Together, the

photographers decided to buy equipment and donate their time and services to needy families in their area.

"Commercial photos can be an indulgence for low-income families," said Pat Gwinnell, who supervises the photographers.

Photographer Antoinette Grimaldi, 41, of Bensonhurst, said she enjoyed taking the pictures. "It makes me feel better and it makes them feel better," she said.

Photographer Thomas Scott, 36, of Brownsville, added, "The children are the best. I like the way they smile."

With the project's success, there are plans to expand it if the group receives more funding, said Roger Moore, a photo group supervisor.

In addition to the priceless photos families receive, Moore said, "the project gives young people and adults an opportunity to see that people with developmental delays are capable."

Photos by LINDA ROSIER





Sam I., photographers Roderick Porteous, 30; Thomas Scott, 36; Antoinette Grimaldi, 41; and Rufus Talbert, 29, all members of the Bay Parkway Photo Group, get ready to take photos of the Soliman family, including little Samah, 3, (above). The photographers all attend the Block Institute, a center for developmentally disabled adults in Gravesend.



The Bay Parkway Photo Group surrounds the Soliman family — mom, Nihal (c.); Mohamed, 4 (r.); Samah, 3 (l.); and Sama, 8 months, on mom's lap — in a group shot. At left, the family is seen through a camera's viewfinder.



Roger Moore, the photo group's supervisor, and photographer Kenya Newton share a laugh while taking pictures for the Solimans. The Solimans, who emigrated from Egypt four years ago, will send the pictures to relatives in Egypt who haven't seen any photos of the family's youngest children.

