

MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER – Diane Dultmeier & Family

By Trina Hedges | Photos by Lisa Galvin



For the last few years our own resident photographer, Diane Dultmeier Ballinger has had the pleasure of meeting and photographing our Feature Families. Every month, she beautifully captures the connections family members share so that we can put faces to their story. This month it's our pleasure to showcase Diane in this special "Meet the Photographer" feature.

As a photographer who spends her days preserving other families' special moments, Diane can relate to the bonds her clients share because she, too, values her own family.

Diane resides in Stuart with her husband, Mike Ballinger, their two sons, Daniel (18) and Andrew (15), and their cats, Sammy and Nathaniel. Through the years, the flexibility of having her own business has meant she's able to be there for her family when they need her. Whether it's home-schooling her kids, being involved with their church or making time for trips, she loves being able to prioritize her family and other relationships.

Diane originally hails from Silver Lake, Kansas and Mike from Edmond, Oklahoma. The couple met in Stuart in 1995 when they were both members of the Treasure Coast chapter of the American Advertising Federation.

Before moving to Florida, Mike earned his bachelor's degree in advertising and marketing from Oklahoma State University. He's been an advertising account executive at a television station, for a minor league hockey team, and various newspapers including the Stuart News. For the last seven years, he's been selling billboards for Clear Channel Outdoor.

Diane attended the University of Kansas, receiving a bachelor's degree in photojournalism. She worked for several newspapers before moving to Stuart in 1991 and starting Dultmeier Photography. She's done many types of photography over the years, but family portraits are her passion. Her business has been located in the Monterey Commons business park for 15 years.

One key to the success of Dultmeier Photography is that Diane has a way of making her clients feel comfortable. She says, "I really want my portraits to reflect the personal relationships and closeness of family members,

and that starts by helping them feel like they can relax and be themselves."

In the early years of her business, Diane always strove to be consistent, trustworthy and reliable, which led to a great reputation in the community. Having this reputation meant that she could also focus on family priorities, knowing the business was already established. For example, she has home-schooled both of her boys during middle school, partly to spend more time together and also to make sure they had a great family and Christian foundation before heading off to high school.

After middle school, Daniel attended Martin County High School as a freshman and then Clark Advanced Learning Center, graduating this May with his high school diploma and an AA degree from IRSC. He will be going on to FAU's Wilkes Honors College in Jupiter in August. Andrew is now a high school sophomore and plans to attend Hobe Sound Christian Academy this fall.

Through the years, the Ballinger house has been a hotspot for many of the boys' friends. With countless sleepovers, airsoft wars, and book studies, Daniel and Andrew have grown up with an emphasis on cultivating strong and lasting friendships.

The family's emphasis on positive relationships is also seen in their involvement with Boys Scouts of America. Both boys started scouts in the first grade, with Daniel now an Eagle Scout and Andrew a Life Scout and the leader of his troop. As an Assistant Scout Master for seven years, Mike joined the boys for many meetings and camping trips. This summer, both boys are excited to be going on a weeklong canoe and



camping adventure in the wilderness of Northern Minnesota and Canada. The boys are sure to have fun, but then again, the whole family likes to camp!

For the past five years, the family has spent many weekends tent camping in state parks throughout Florida. Their most recent adventure found them at Fort Clinch State Park, where evenings were spent by the campfire and days were for exploring the nearby towns. Many summers have also been spent on the open road driving to Kansas and Oklahoma to visit extended family.

Diane's desire to be there for her family was never more evident than

when her mom, Lorna, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2012 and moved from Kansas to Stuart to be close to her daughter. Lorna passed away in 2015, and as devastating as it was, Diane knows that her mother's journey with dementia strengthened



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her family, making them more caring and understanding of others.

Diane and Mike credit their strong Christian faith as the foundation for their family. A favorite Bible verse is Proverbs 3:5-6, which says, "Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track."

As active members of Covenant Fellowship Baptist Church since 2001, the Ballingers have been active in various ministries and both boys are very active in the Youth Group. They've participated in mission trips to inner-city Baltimore and have attended many summer camps in Tennessee and Central Florida.

Their lives are truly a testament to the value they place in both family and giving back to others!

A special thanks to Diane Dultmeier for letting us showcase her family this month!

If you would like to nominate your neighbor to be featured in a future issue, simply email your suggestions to gbowen@bestversionmedia.com

Thanks to our friends at *Palm City Neighbors* magazine for this wonderful feature in their July 2019 issue!

