

INSPIRED

SEPTEMBER 2026 | ISSUE 142



2026 INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION WINNERS

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PORTRAIT & CHILD PHOTOGRAPHERS



WE LOVE OUR COMMUNITY

The National Association of Portrait and Child Photographers is a member-based association representing and promoting the community of professional portrait and child photographers. NAPCP provides a valuable platform for seasoned veterans and rising professionals alike to share their experiences, hone their craft and raise their professional visibility.

Cover Image by Kate McCord of Kate McCord Photography, LLC

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TO OUR BELOVED NAPCP FAMILY

There is always something special about seeing the work our community creates—and this month’s issue of Inspired is full of it.

Inside, we’re celebrating the winning images from our 2026 International Image Competition, along with words from the talented artists behind them. We hope you’ll take time not only to admire the images, but also to read the stories, inspiration, and intention that went into creating them.

We’re also taking you back to Asheville, North Carolina, with a recap from this month’s NAPCP Getaway. It was a few unforgettable days of learning, creating, connecting, and spending time together as photographers—and we’re excited to share a glimpse of the experience with you.

As we look ahead, there is plenty happening at NAPCP. Master Photographer Certification in Fine Art opens November 9, so now is the perfect time to begin reviewing your portfolio and getting your images ready.

Our next NAPCP Social is coming up on October 14 with Valerie Eidson, who will be sharing how she uses external lighting outdoors to create beautiful, intentional images in a variety of lighting conditions. You can RSVP anytime at napcp.com/napcp-socials-the-learning-hour.

And don’t forget about our monthly Office Hours—your chance to bring your questions, talk through your business, and connect with other like-minded photographers who understand the challenges and opportunities that come with this work.

Finally, as you explore this month’s Nature-themed features, we hope they inspire you to create something for our next issue. Next month’s theme is Light, and we would love to see your interpretation. Start looking through your recent work—or create something new—and send us the images that show us what light means to you. Submissions are due by December 1, and you can submit your work at napcp.com/contribute-to-our-magazine.

Thank you, as always, for being part of this community and for continuing to share your work, your ideas, and your creativity with us.

With gratitude,
The NAPCP Team

Your “To Do” List

OCTOBER 2026

☐ SIGN UP FOR MENTORSHIP

Mentorship is one of the most valuable resources available to NAPCP Members. It offers personalized support, expert guidance, and advice tailored specifically to your goals and style. Don’t miss the chance to learn from seasoned professionals who are passionate about helping you grow — these opportunities are exclusive to our member community!

☐ SUBMIT YOUR “LIGHT” IMAGES

Submit your images! Our December 2026 issue will feature “Light” themed imagery. Visit napcp.com/contribute-to-our-magazine to submit your images by December 1 for consideration.

☐ ATTEND THE NEXT NAPCP SOCIAL

Join us on October 14 for a NAPCP Social with Valerie Eidson as she shows you how to confidently use off-camera flash in any outdoor lighting situation. Learn how to create beautiful, intentional light anywhere—without waiting for the “perfect” conditions.

NOVEMBER 2026

☐ PREPARE FOR MASTER CERTIFICATION

Submissions for Master Photographer Certification in the Fine Art category will open November 9th! Master Certification is a great way to increase your marketability to clients, so get your portfolio ready!

☐ SUBMIT A BLOG ARTICLE

Did you know that we are always accepting posts written by members for the NAPCP blog? Visit napcp.com/contribute-to-the-blog to learn more.

NAPCP 2026 INTERNATIONAL IMAGE COMPETITION

WINNERS ISSUE

Each year, our organization proudly offers members the exclusive chance to be recognized as award-winning professional portrait & child photographers through the member-only NAPCP International Image Competition. First, second, and third place awards are presented in each category, along with merit recognition for the top five percent of highest-scoring entries.

Our September 2026 issue of Inspired magazine honors the winners of the 2026 NAPCP International Image Competition, held in April. This special edition is a tribute to their artistic vision and creative excellence.

1ST



KASHA GAGE - "YOU COMING?"

CATEGORY **BABY/TODDLER**

<i>first place</i>	<i>second place</i>	<i>third place</i>
KASHA GAGE	KRISTINE ESPOSITO	KATE MCCORD
Kasha Gage Photography kashagage.com	Kristine Esposito Photography kristineespositophotography.com	Kate McCord Photography katemccordphotography.com

merit recognition

LOUISA VILARDI
Louisa Vilardi Photography
louisavilardiphotography.com

Was there a challenge you had to overcome while creating this image, either technically or creatively?

The biggest challenge was photographing my curious toddler on her own timeline. At that age, you can't ask and expect them to hold still long enough or take direction to position themselves exactly where you need them to be. Using two Profoto lights, I knew where the light would fall, but I had no idea if she would walk into it, look in the right direction, or stay there long enough to make everything come together.

So I prepared the scene and waited as she wandered down the hallway with one of her favorite stuffed animals. I gently prompted her to peek into the bathroom and tell me what she saw. At the same time, my dog Henry peeked around the corner, and for a split second everything came together.

Moments like this can't really be manufactured. They come from patience, observation, and being ready before they happen.

— KASHA GAGE

2ND



“MOTHERHOOD SERENITY”
KRISTINE ESPOSITO

What inspired the concept, mood, or story behind your winning image?

This mom has struggled post-partum with seeing her beauty. She has had a number of health complications that have really affected her self confidence. My goal is always to try and show her what I see when I look at her. I want her to feel beautiful and to give herself grace as she navigates her changing body and all that comes with being a mom. She loves her daughter so so much, and I wanted to convey that at the same time. Beautiful light brings out the best in everyone, so when I saw it, I whisked us all over to that spot. She has this image hanging in her home and I hope she looks at it and sees herself as a piece of art!

— KRISTINE ESPOSITO

3RD



KATE MCCORD - “SAY WHAT?”

What part of the competition process feels most valuable to you?

I’d say receiving feedback and being recognized are the most valuable parts for me. I think, whether we admit it or not, we all seek validation in some way. Photography is such a personal and creative job, and we put so much time, care, and intention into what we create. It feels good to have that work seen and appreciated by other people in the industry.

The feedback helps me continue to grow, while the recognition is a reminder that the hard work I’m putting in is noticed. Not because I need an award to tell me my work has value, but because sometimes it’s really nice to have that outside confirmation that says, hey, you’re doing a good job.

— KATE MCCORD

CATEGORY **CHILD**

first place

KRISTIN MERCK
Kristin Merck Photography, LLC
kmerckphotography.com

second place

VALERIE EIDSON
Valerie Eidson Photography
valerieeidson.com

third place

STEFANIE SZALACINSKI
Stefanie Szalacinski Photography
szalacinskiphotography.com

merit recognition

HEATHER SCHARF
Heather Scharf Photography
heatherscharfphotography.com

COREY NIMMER
Corey Flint Photography
coreyflint.com

STEFANIE SZALACINSKI
Stefanie Szalacinski Photography
szalacinskiphotography.com

CAITLIN MATTE
Caitlin Matte Photography
caitlinmattephoto.com

1ST



KRISTIN MERCK - "BALLER"

Was there a challenge you had to overcome while creating this image, either technically or creatively?

With this image, and others that I photograph on-site, I sometimes have to work with less than ideal backgrounds. This one wasn't too bad, but it was a small, bright gym with imperfections on the wall behind him. I love the challenge of using light and shadow to really bring out my subject in a creative way. My clients have to trust me that it will look good because what they see is not what I see. So being able to do it in-camera gets them excited when I show them how it actually looks. And when I'm working with kids and teens, it really helps to build their confidence when they see themselves like this.

— KRISTIN MERCK

2ND



VALERIE EIDSON - "COMING UP FOR AIR"

What inspired the concept, mood, or story behind your winning image?

My daughter had this cute swimsuit and matching goggles and I knew I wanted to photograph them together with water because the colors are complementary with blue. In a perfect world we would've actually been at the beach or pool, but that did not happen so we created our own "water look" using a blue backdrop, a hair blower and some Photoshop magic.

— VALERIE EIDSON

3RD



STEFANIE SZALACINSKI - "A WISH SHE CARRIES"

How do you know when an image has that extra something special?

For me, an image has that extra something special when I stop looking at the technical aspects and simply feel something. At that point, I'm no longer thinking about the light, composition, or editing. Instead, I'm drawn into the emotion of the image.

I think a lot of photographs are meaningful because they're our children. We know them, we love them, and we have memories attached to that moment. But when a photograph can make someone feel something about a child they've never met, that's when I think you've created something really special. If a complete stranger can look at an image and smile, feel a sense of wonder, or be reminded of their own childhood, then the photograph has become bigger than the person in it.

— STEFANIE SZALACINSKI

CATEGORY **FAMILY**

first place

DEANNA O’CONNOR
Deanna O’Connor Photography
deannaconnorphotography.com

second place

CAITLIN MATTE
Caitlin Matte Photography
caitlinmattephoto.com

merit recognition

RHIANNON STUI SO
Rhiannon Livardo Photography
rhiannonlivardo.com

ALISHIA POTTER
The Potter’s Hand Photography
thepottershbandphotography.com

JULIE HAMLIN
Sacred Sage Photography
sacredsagephotography.mypixieset.com

third place

REBECCA LUECK
Becca Jean Photography
beccajeanphotography.com

JENN CHEN
Jenn Chen Photography
jennchenphotography.com

JODI SCHAFFAN
Jay Phina Photography
jayphinaphotography.com

1ST



DEANNA O’CONNOR - “HOLDING ON”

What inspired the concept, mood, or story behind your winning image?

The inspiration behind my image, “Holding On”, came to me one day when I picked my son up and realized his feet were reaching down to my knees when I held him. It was one of those bittersweet parenting moments where I became aware of how fleeting all of this is, and pretty soon he’d be too big to want to be held. While he was still willing, I wanted to freeze this moment in time. Since 2022 I’ve been completing a personal Project 365 of my family - some days I create masterpieces, and other days I’m snapping a last-minute photo with my phone. ‘Holding On’ was a result of my Project 365. For a few days leading up to the photo I planned out where and when to take the image, and I loved how I could use our door to frame us and the leading lines from the hallway and stairs made for a strong composition.

— DEANNA O’CONNOR

2ND



CAITLIN MATTE - "AT THE LITTLE BEACH HOUSE"

What did this image teach you about your own creative voice or artistic style?

It reinforced that I'm most drawn to storytelling through environment. I love creating images that show not just who someone is, but where they are and what this chapter of life feels like. Rather than filling the frame with people, I'm often inspired by stepping back and letting the location help tell the story.

— CAITLIN MATTE

What would you say to another photographer who is nervous about putting their work out there?

I don't submit images with the goal to win, because that would be a lot more intimidating. If you go into it telling yourself it's just a bit of fun to see what happens, it feels a lot easier to put yourself out there. And if you get an added bonus of winning something, that's something to be celebrated. But just the act of submitting is something to be celebrated, too!

— REBECCA LUECK



3RD



REBECCA LUECK - "REFLECTION OF HOME"

CATEGORY MATERNITY

first place

LAUREN POSS

Lauren Poss Photography
laurenpossphotography.com

second place

ANA PAVESI

Ana Pavesi Studio
anapavesistudio.com

third place

JULIE HAMLIN

Sacred Sage Photography
sacredsagephotography.mypixieset.com

merit recognition

KIMBERLY TANK

Kimberly Tank Art & Photography
kimberlytank.com

BETTY LAURENT

Betty Laurent Photography
bettylaurentphotography.com

1ST



LAUREN POSS - "GROWING"

What would you say to another photographer who is nervous about putting their work out there?

You can only grow from this process. It helps you think critically about your work before, during, and after the shooting process. I've had pieces I absolutely loved not score well in competitions and then pieces that weren't my favorites do well technically. There has to be a balance to all of it, and it helps keep that in the back of your mind as you work. Keep producing art that you and your clients love and keep pushing yourself technically and artistically, also.

— LAUREN POSS

MATERNITY CONTINUED

2ND



ANA PAVESI - “THE SHAPE OF MOTHERHOOD”

What inspired the concept, mood, or story behind your winning image?

I wanted something flowy and magical to highlight the shape of motherhood, without covering the bump. So I created wind, and I love how the mom’s expression is one of bliss.

— ANA PAVESI

3RD



JULIE HAMLIN - “BECOMING”

What did this image teach you about your own creative voice or artistic style?

This image reinforced something I have come to recognize as a defining part of my creative voice. As a photographer, I am drawn to simplicity with intention. While I love storytelling and emotion, I also love creating images where every element serves a purpose and nothing feels unnecessary. For this maternity session, the client specifically requested a studio session and wanted a very clean, modern look. The challenge was creating something minimal while still feeling powerful, feminine, and connected to the season of motherhood. Rather than relying on elaborate styling, props, or a complex set, I focused on shape, light, texture, and composition to tell the story. What this image taught me is that my artistic style often lives in restraint. I don’t always need more to create impact. Sometimes the strongest images come from carefully removing distractions and allowing light, form, and emotion to speak for themselves. I was especially happy with how this image came together because it achieved exactly what the client envisioned while still feeling unmistakably like my work. It was a reminder that listening to a client’s vision and blending it with my own artistic perspective is where some of the most meaningful photographs are created.

— JULIE HAMLIN

CATEGORY **NEWBORN**

first place

JODI SCHAFFAN

Jay Phina Photography
jayphinaphotography.com

second place

KRISTIN BOURG

K-Rae Images
kraeimages.com

third place

KRISTIN BOURG

K-Rae Images
kraeimages.com

merit recognition

JULIE HAMLIN

Sacred Sage Photography
sacredsagephotography.mypixieset.com

KATE MCCORD

Kate McCord Photography
katemccordphotography.com

1ST



JODI SCHAFFAN - "THE COLOR OF LOVE"

Can you tell us about the winning photograph and what inspired it?

There is so much division in the world today. I knew I wanted the baby's African American heritage and her white heritage to be part of the same photograph but in a delicate way. That's when I came up with the froggie pose with each parent holding their baby up.

— JODI SCHAFFAN



KRISTIN BOURG - "MY MOM THE OBGYN"

What inspired the concept, mood, or story behind your winning image?

This image was especially meaningful to me because the little girl's mother is not only an OB/GYN, but also the physician who delivered my daughter this year. When I photographed their newborn session, I wanted to create a subtle tribute to her mother's profession and the important role she plays in the lives of so many families.

I provided a stethoscope as a simple prop, and during the session this sweet little girl gave us the most genuine smile while holding it. The image beautifully captures both the joy of new life and the connection between a mother's career and her daughter's future possibilities. It was one of those perfect, unscripted moments that came together naturally.

— KRISTIN BOURG



KRISTIN BOURG - "THREE SOULS ONE BEGINNING"

1ST



ELIZABETH SIMMONS - "LIMITLESS"

What inspired the concept, mood, or story behind your winning image?

This photo was from the final series of photos that I took of my daughter during her senior year in high school. She had just completed a brutal auditioning process for musical theater programs, and she asked if I could do her final Senior portraits in the theater. There were moments when she questioned her decision, as she was faced with rejections and setbacks, but also moments where she learned to own her voice as an actress. The concept of this photo was born from the belief that if she could survive the rejections, the possibilities were limitless. I think that we are often told that success is born of talent, but the truth is that success is born of perseverance.

— ELIZABETH SIMMONS

CATEGORY SENIOR

first place

ELIZABETH SIMMONS

EK Simmons Photography

eksimmons.com

second place

KRISTEN HAZELTON

Kristen Hazelton Photography LLC

kristenhazelton.com

third place

JOE BAKER

Joe Baker Photography

jobakerphotography.com

merit recognition

JODI SCHAFFAN

Jay Phina Photography

jayphinaphotography.com

KRISTIE BRADLEY

Kristie Bradley Photography

kristiebradleyphotography.com

2ND



KRISTEN HAZELTON - “ORIEL”

What inspired the concept, mood, or story behind your winning image?

My senior came to me with the vision of a “Dark Academia” vibe for her photoshoot, and she and her family also had a strong interest in architecture and incorporating some of those classic Chicago locations into the imagery of her senior portraits. Chicago’s Rookery Building has long been a beautiful and architecturally significant location in the heart of Chicago, with architects Burnham and Root creating the building and Frank Lloyd Wright putting his updated stamp on the work later on. With the dark wood and beautiful leading lines, the Oriel Staircase was a perfect spot for my client’s portraits.

— KRISTEN HAZELTON

3RD



JOE BAKER - “THE COOL FACTOR”

How do you know when an image has that extra something special?

I think an image has that something extra when it gets those extra questions when you post it on social media. When it causes the viewer to look through the entire image or even wonder how it was lit and my favorite: when people ask if the clouds were added in post.

— JOE BAKER

CATEGORY SIBLINGS

first place

ASHLEY COCHRAN

Ashley Cochran Photography
ashleycochranphotography.com

second place

JENNIFER CHEN

Jenn Chen Photography
jennchenphotography.com

third place

JENNIFER CHEN

Jenn Chen Photography
jennchenphotography.com

merit recognition

KATRINA JONES

Kat Jones Creative
katjonescreative.com

1ST



ASHLEY COCHRAN - "HIDE AND SEEK"

What inspired the concept, mood, or story behind your winning image?

I wanted to create this image to illustrate the playful relationship between my daughter and son in this stage of their childhood. My son was growing into toddlerhood, and we were spending lots of time outside at nearby parks while enjoying the beginning of spring. I'm also always inspired by nature, the seasons, along with children's books, TV shows, and movies. I wanted to incorporate the blooming daffodils and tree trunk to show the change of season and give the image a storybook feel.

— ASHLEY COCHRAN

SIBLINGS CONTINUED

2ND



JENN CHEN - “REFLECTIONS OF LOVE”

What part of the competition process feels most valuable to you?

For me, it’s pushing myself outside of my comfort zone. Choosing to enter a competition means putting my work up next to some of the best in the industry and being willing to see how it holds up.... that takes a kind of bravery that doesn’t come naturally to me. It’s easy to stay comfortable and keep my images to myself, but competing forces me to trust that what I create is actually good enough to stand on its own.

— JENN CHEN

3RD



JENN CHEN - “THE FOREVER FIELDS”

What would you say to a photographer who is nervous about putting their work out there?

Remember that competition isn’t just about the win... it’s about seeing where you stand and using that as fuel. A rejection or a middling score doesn’t erase the value of your work; it just gives you information. The bravest thing you can do is submit anyway, because never knowing is worse.

— JENN CHEN

1ST



HEATHER BIENZ - "THE PHOENIX"

Was there a challenge you had to overcome while creating this image, either technically or creatively?

The biggest challenge in creating this image was getting the silk to form the exact arch and shape in camera that I had envisioned. It took quite a bit of trial and adjustment. We experimented with her arm movement, where she held the silk, how quickly she whipped it through the air, and where her arm ended after the motion. We probably tried it 10 to 15 times before everything finally came together and we captured the shot with the exact shape and movement I had been hoping for.

— HEATHER BIENZ

CATEGORY **STUDIO PORTRAITURE**

first place

HEATHER BIENZ
Heather Bienz Photography
heatherbienzphotography.com

second place

DEANNA O’CONNOR
Deanna O’Connor Photography
deannaconnorphotography.com

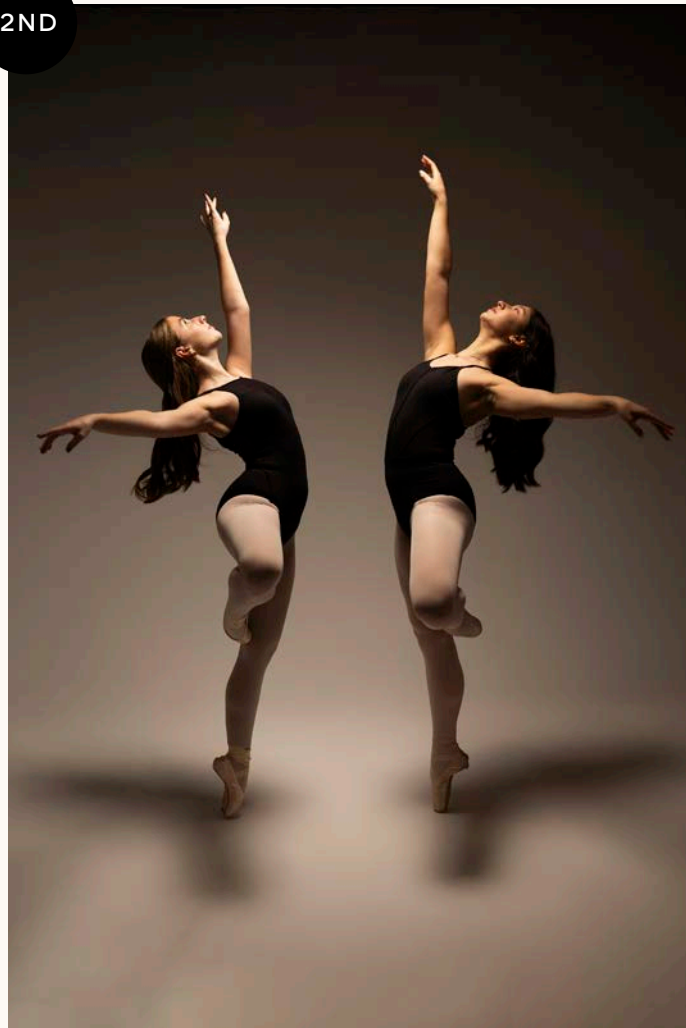
third place

DEANNA O’CONNOR
Deanna O’Connor Photography
deannaconnorphotography.com

merit recognition

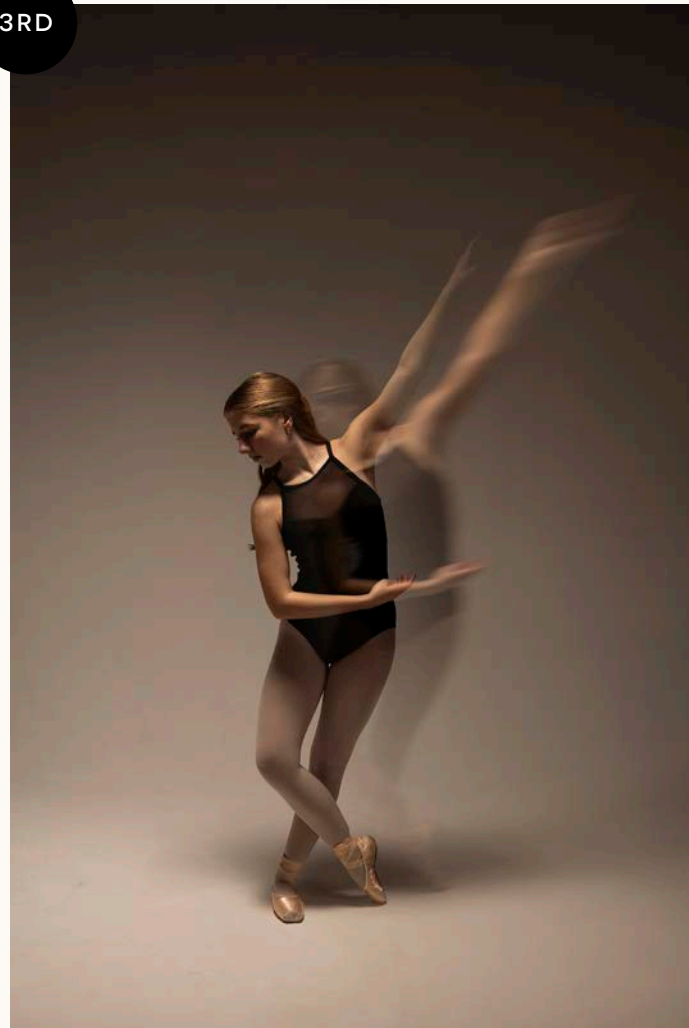
RACHEL DICKMAN
Rachel Dickman Photography
racheldickmanphotography.com

2ND



“POETRY IN MOTION”
DEANNA O’CONNOR

3RD



“BESIDE MYSELF”
DEANNA O’CONNOR

Was there a challenge you had to overcome while creating this image, either technically or creatively?

To balance technical excellence with emotion and storytelling takes a lot of planning and practice! I’m fortunate to work with a lot of dancers, and they are amazing at pairing their emotions with the poses or dance steps they are performing. They are very passionate about what they do, and it feels contagious, which is how I think I mesh the technical side of photography with the storytelling side in dance photography.

Why did you choose this particular image to submit, and what made you feel that it was competition-worthy?

I chose to submit ‘Beside Myself’ because I loved how it was classic with a twist. The pose and the lighting worked together to create an elegant look, and I loved the way the motion blur turned out in this image. All of these elements worked together to create a photo that I just love and enjoy coming back to - I see something new each time I look at it, which is why I felt it was competition-worthy.

— DEANNA O’CONNOR



Guidance, Growth, and Goal-Setting

JUST A CLICK AWAY!

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR EXPERT GUIDANCE TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS?

The NAPCP Mentorship Program provides personalized support and professional development opportunities within the portrait and child photography industry. Designed for photographers at all stages of their careers, the program connects participants with a network of experienced mentors who offer guidance tailored to individual goals and challenges.

Why Mentorship?

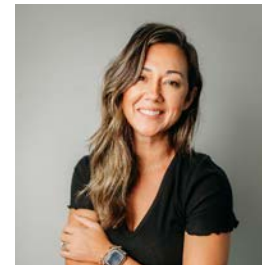
Mentorship is a proven way to achieve meaningful, measurable growth. Through the NAPCP Mentorship Program, industry experts share their knowledge and experience to help photographers navigate challenges, develop strategic plans, and build strong professional connections. The program is structured to support participants at their current level while helping them progress toward their long-term career objectives. To learn more or schedule a session, visit napcp.com/napcp-mentors.



ALICE PARK



ASHLEY MCBROOM



ERIKA HOLIFIELD



HEATHER BIENZ



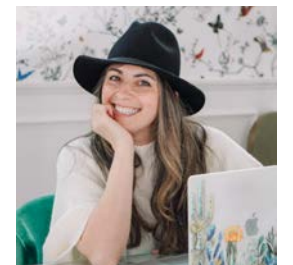
JENNIFER KAPALA



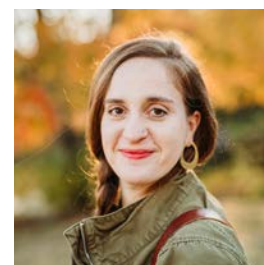
JULIE HAMLIN



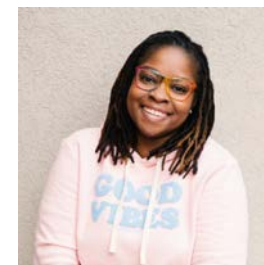
KRISTEN MONTGOMERY



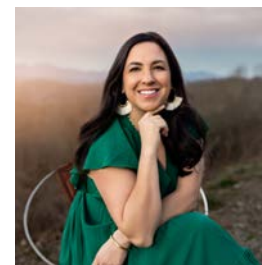
LENA ANTARAMIAN



LYNDSAY MCNIFF



OCTAVIA ELEASE



VALERIE EIDSON



WILLY WILSON

Asheville, NC | September 2026

NAPCP GETAWAY

— recap —

A WARM WELCOME IN Asheville

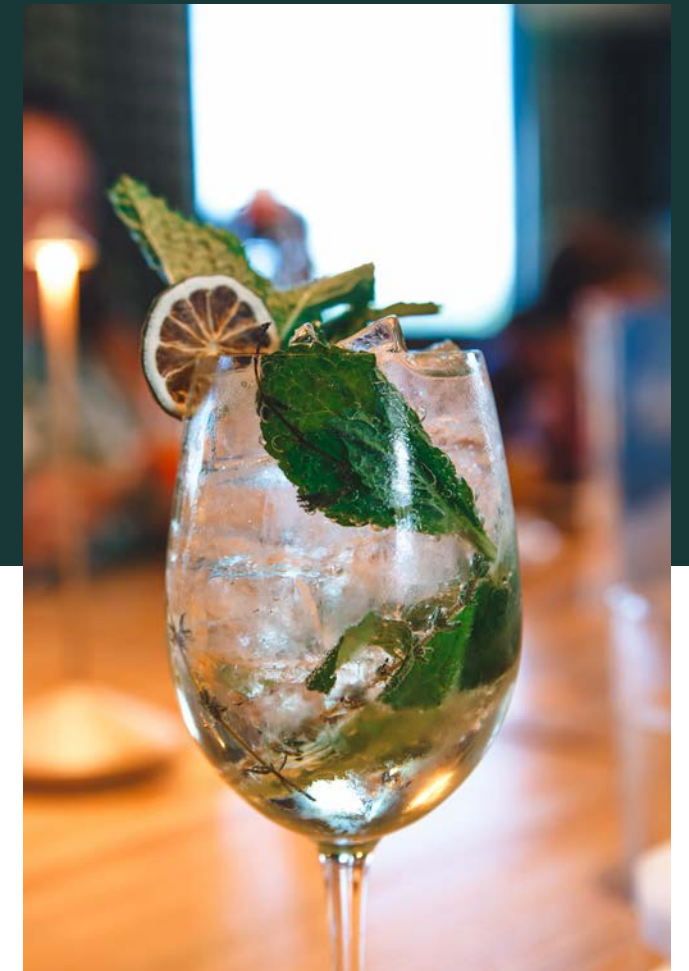
From September 14–17, 2026, NAPCP members gathered in Asheville, North Carolina, for a memorable NAPCP Getaway hosted by Valerie Eidson, NAPCP Member, Mentor, and our 2024 Photographer of the Year. Surrounded by the beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains, our group spent several days learning, creating, serving the community, and—perhaps most importantly—connecting with one another.



The getaway began with an arrival day and a welcome reception at Sopranas, located in downtown Asheville. With wonderful food, beautiful rooftop views, and an incredible sunset over the mountains, it was the perfect setting to settle in, meet new friends, and reconnect with fellow NAPCP members.

Guests were also greeted with a special NAPCP welcome bag filled with thoughtful goodies to kick off the getaway. Each bag included NAPCP shirts, a custom hat created by GoldenEyeTruckers, and a beautiful custom Asheville print designed exclusively for the getaway by NAPCP's Chief Creative Officer, Deanne Mroz. These special touches made everyone feel welcomed and added a little extra excitement to the start of our time together.

It was a wonderful first evening filled with great food, meaningful conversations, and plenty of time to get to know one another while taking in the breathtaking sunset views of Asheville and the surrounding mountains.







Giving Back

THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

Day two began with one of the most meaningful experiences of the trip: a group service project at the Asheville Botanical Gardens at UNCA.

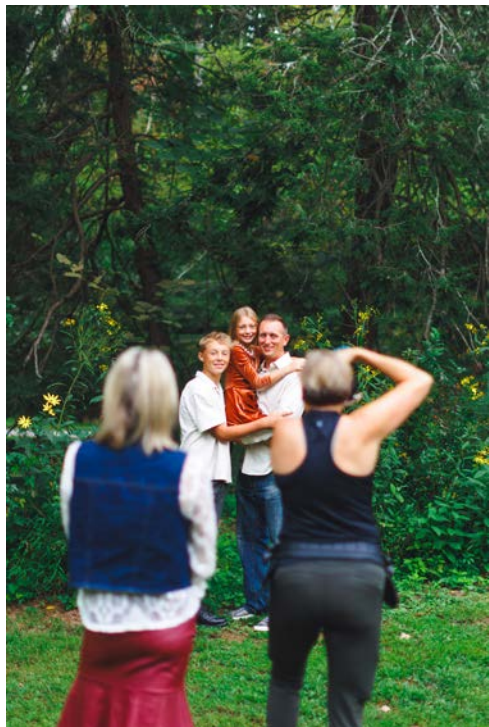
Together, our group photographed families from the Asheville area who had been impacted by Hurricane Helene. Many of these families had lost their homes and treasured belongings, including photographs and other irreplaceable memories.

Being able to photograph these families offered a small reminder of what matters most—our loved ones and the memories we create together. Providing each family with new photographs after such a devastating experience gave them something tangible to hold onto as they began moving forward.

For our group, the experience was equally meaningful. Serving the Asheville community together allowed us to use our talents to bring a little light and encouragement to families who had endured incredibly difficult circumstances.



Before we picked up our cameras, we listened. Hearing the stories of families affected by Hurricane Helene reminded us that photography is about more than beautiful images—it's about connection, memories, and helping preserve the moments that matter most. We were honored to listen, serve, and tell their stories through photography.





AN AFTERNOON AT THE *Biltmore*

After the service project, we gathered for lunch at the Biltmore Estate, followed by time to tour the property and explore its beautiful grounds. With its grand architecture, lush gardens, open fields, and mountain views, the Biltmore provided an incredible backdrop for experimenting with creative photography techniques.

As the afternoon transitioned into evening, it was time for our Senior Shootout. Valerie had thoughtfully prepared and styled both a senior model and a family for us to photograph throughout the property.

Our senior model was beautifully styled in a flowing white dress, creating an elegant contrast against the historic architecture and surrounding landscape. As we photographed her beneath the trellis, in the grassy fields, and in front of the Biltmore, we experimented with different techniques to create unique and artistic images. Photographers played with composition, movement, light, and creative effects, including the use of crystals and other objects placed in front of the lens to create interesting reflections, flares, and dreamy textures.

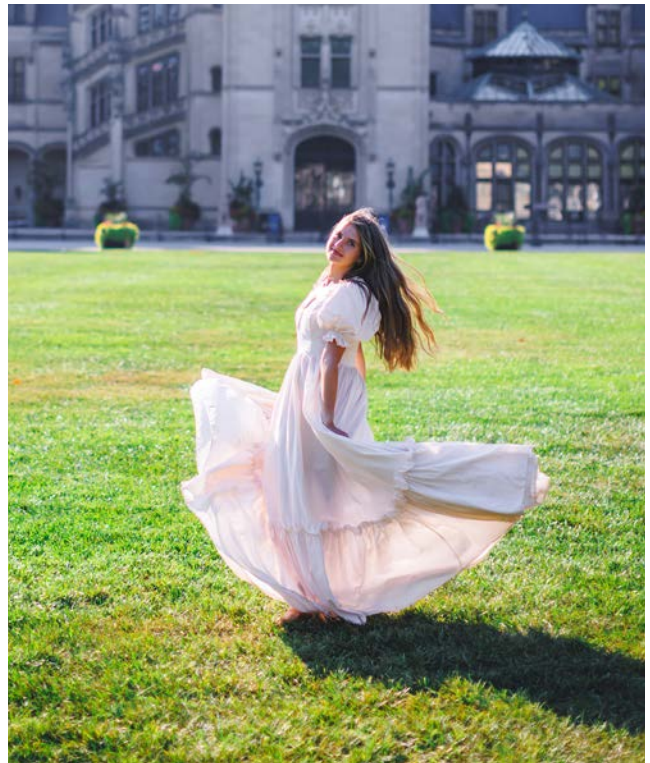
The experimentation continued as we moved throughout the property, using the environment in different ways and seeing how small changes in technique could completely transform an image. It was a great opportunity for everyone to step outside of their usual approach and simply play with their cameras and creativity.

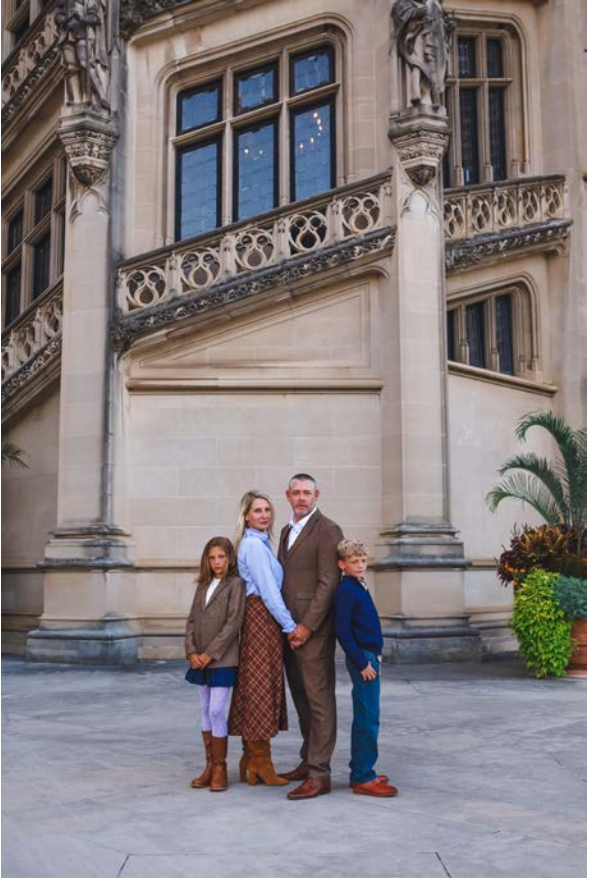
Next came a beautifully styled family session. Valerie selected vintage-inspired clothing for the family, creating a timeless look that complemented the historic setting. As the sun began to set, we photographed them in front of the Biltmore and throughout the property, with the mountains stretching into the distance.

The combination of beautiful styling, golden light, an incredible location, and creative experimentation made the Biltmore shootout a highlight of the getaway. It was a chance to learn from one another, try new techniques, and capture images that felt both intentional and unique.

After our time at the Biltmore, everyone headed back into Asheville to explore the city and enjoy dinner on their own.





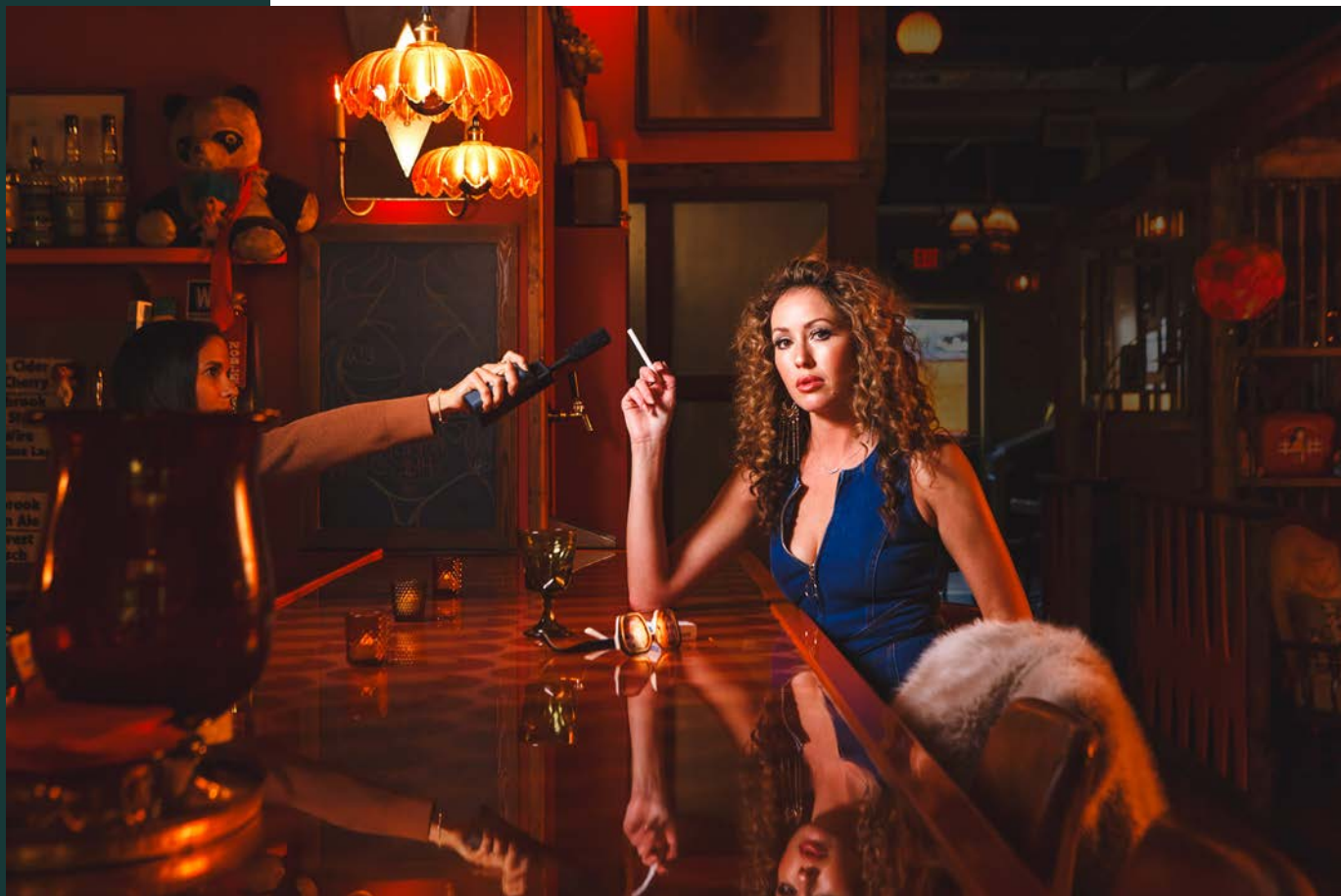


LIGHTING, GELS & 1970S *Inspiration*

The following day brought a completely different creative experience. Our group gathered at Daytrip, a 1970s-themed bar in Asheville, where Valerie led us through a hands-on lesson in lighting techniques.

We were especially grateful to Geekoto, who generously provided triggers for attendees to use during the shoot. Having these triggers allowed each photographer to actively participate in the lighting setups and experiment with off-camera flash throughout the afternoon. Their support made it possible for everyone to get hands-on experience rather than simply watching a demonstration.





The space was filled with inspiration, and our model, Alex Eischeid, found the perfect outfits to bring the theme to life. We rotated through three different setups—a retro living room, the bar, and a fun disco-inspired scene featuring Alex dancing beneath a disco ball.

Using the Geekoto triggers, we experimented with flash and colored gels, seeing firsthand how different lighting choices could completely transform the mood and feel of an image.

Valerie also introduced us to her Smoke Ninja, which allowed us to incorporate atmospheric smoke into our scenes. We experimented with filling an entire scene with smoke as well as creating a stream of smoke around Alex's cigarette for a more authentic 1970s-inspired look.

It was an incredibly fun afternoon of experimentation and creativity, with plenty of opportunities for each photographer to try something new.

A huge thank-you to Geekoto for supporting our Asheville Getaway and helping make this hands-on lighting experience possible. We truly appreciate your generosity and your support of the NAPCP photography community!

LEARNING BEYOND THE CAMERA

After Daytrip, we returned to the Cambria for a boxed lunch before gathering together for an afternoon of education and conversation.

Valerie shared a variety of editing techniques, giving everyone an opportunity to learn from her approach and incorporate new ideas into their own workflows.

We then moved into a roundtable business discussion that became one of the most valuable parts of the getaway. Each attendee wrote down something they were currently struggling with in their business. We shared those questions with the group, and members with experience in those particular areas offered ideas, advice, and encouragement.

It was a wonderful reminder of the strength of our NAPCP community. We may each run our own businesses, but we don't have to navigate the challenges alone.





A BEAUTIFUL FAREWELL

We wrapped up our time together with a farewell dinner at Wildwood Still, another Asheville rooftop destination with spectacular mountain views and a beautiful sunset.

It was the perfect ending to several days filled with photography, education, service, creativity, laughter, and connection.

The Asheville Getaway was about so much more than taking beautiful photographs. We had the opportunity to use our craft to serve others, learn new techniques, share our experiences, encourage one another, and create memories together.

We are incredibly grateful to Valerie for hosting and creating such a thoughtful experience, and to everyone who joined us and helped make the getaway so special.

Until next time!



THANK YOU, *Valerie!*

This incredible experience was made possible by NAPCP Mentor and 2024 Photographer of the Year Valerie Eidson of Valerie Eidson Fine Art Photo. As our Asheville host, Valerie poured her heart, creativity, and local knowledge into every detail of the getaway. From helping us plan the itinerary and scout locations to styling and coordinating each of our photoshoots, Valerie made every experience feel intentional, inspiring, and uniquely Asheville.

Valerie's creative vision came to life through our time behind the camera. She thoughtfully brought

together locations, models, wardrobe, details, and lighting to create beautiful opportunities for attendees to photograph, experiment, learn, and build their portfolios. Beyond the beautiful images, Valerie created space for connection, collaboration, and creative growth, making the entire experience feel truly special.

We are deeply grateful to Valerie for sharing her time, talent, and love of Asheville with our NAPCP community. Through her vision, Asheville became more than a destination. It became a place to slow down, reconnect, create, and be inspired.

CONNECT WITH VALERIE

valerieeidson.com

[@valerieeidson](https://www.instagram.com/valerieeidson)

[/valerieeidsonphotography](https://www.facebook.com/valerieeidsonphotography)

Congratulations TO OUR FEATURED ARTISTS



Jamie Rubeis | *Jamie Rubeis Photography*



Kristi Foreman | *Picture Perfect Portraits*



Katrina Hecksher Jones | *Kat Jones Creative*



Ann Marie Grocholski | *AMG Photography*



Charis Kauffman | *Charis Elisabeth Photography*



Ute Cowan | *Ute-Christin Photography LLC*



Kasha Gage | *Kasha Gage Photography*



Robin Litrenta | *Robin Litrenta Photography*



Reanna Negron | *Reanna Nicole Photography*

A special congratulations to this month's featured artists, selected from our weekly check-ins in the NAPCP Member Community on Facebook.

Do you want to see your work featured?
Share your work with us on Fridays!



INSPIRED

LIGHT | DECEMBER 2026

NAPCP's monthly Inspired themes celebrate outstanding images from members and non-members on an ongoing basis. We can't wait to see your light-filled images for our upcoming issue in December. These monthly themes aim to give professional photographers ample opportunities to show off their work and have it published in print! Visit napcp.com to submit!

Submissions Close December 1st

THE
Nature
ISSUE

SEPTEMBER 2026





Carolyn Ann Ryan

Gear:

Canon R5 | 70-200mm

Settings:

f/3.5 | 1/250 | ISO 640

Business:

Carolyn Ann Ryan Photography

Website:

carolynannryan.com

Instagram:

@CarolynAnnRyan



Kristin Bourg

Gear:

Canon R6 | 35mm

Settings:

f/1.4 | 1/250 | ISO 200

Business:

K-Rae Images

Website:

kraeimages.com

Instagram:

@dallasbirthphotographer



Andrea Flanagan

For this senior session, I had her on a rock, shoes off, dress getting wet and dirty... I could tell she felt beautiful and confident at the end of our amazing session. The sun had just left the sky and it was calm and serene. Side note: the bugs were another story and I spent a fantastic amount of time in Photoshop editing them out!

”

Gear:

Sony A7M4 | 35mm

Settings:

f/4 | 1/640

Business:

Andrea Flanagan Photography

Website:

andreaflanagan.com

Instagram:

@andreaflanaganphotography

Charis Kauffman

Gear:

Canon R6 | 28-70mm

Business:

Charis Elisabeth Photography

Website:

chariselisabeth.com

Instagram:

@chariselisabethphotography



Dallas Denoo

Gear:

Nikon Z6iii | 85mm

Settings:

f/1.8 | 1/1600 | ISO 320

Business:

Dallas Renee Photography

Website:

dallasreneephotography.com

Instagram:

@dallas_renee_photography



Katrina Jones

Business:

Kat Jones Creative

Gear:

Canon 5D | 85mm

Website:

katjonescreative.com

Facebook:

/katjonescreative



April Cannon MEMBER

Business Name:

Running Mom Photography

Email:

april@runningmomphotography.com

Website:

runningmomphotography.com

Instagram:

@runningmomphotography

Gear:

Nikon Z8 | 35mm

Settings:

f/2 | 1/640 | ISO 100

featured artist

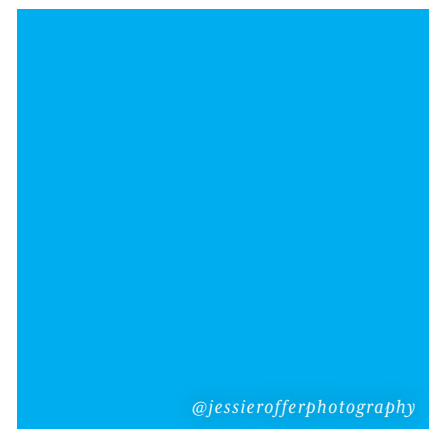
Master
PHOTOGRAPHER

— FINE ART —

SUBMISSIONS OPEN
NOVEMBER 9TH

September 2026

#NAPCPINSTAFAVES



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members.napcp.com/napcpapplication

NAPCP AMBASSADORS

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napcp.com/napcp-mentors

*Back Cover Image by Kristin
Bourg of K-Rae Images*

EXPOSURE

There are so many ways to contribute to the NAPCP Community. Whether it’s through hosting a NAPCP Social, becoming a NAPCP Ambassador or even simply writing a blog article – there’s an opportunity for everyone! We love giving our members a platform through which they can share their knowledge and work with the world!

WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE

For more information, please contact us at: info@napcp.com

- Contribute to Inspired Magazine
- Host a NAPCP Social
- Contribute to the NAPCP Blog
- Become a NAPCP Ambassador

