



Getting Started:

We recommend a few key steps to make your volunteer partnership with NILMDTS rewarding to both the families we serve, and you. The BEST way to get started is by reading and absorbing the information and instructions in the training manual. The excerpts below are from CHAPTER 2 in the manual.

GETTING STARTED IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Qualifications to be a NILMDTS Affiliated Photographer

In an effort to ensure that all families receive the same quality gift from volunteers in our program, it is imperative that NILMDTS photographers have professional photography and editing skills. This does not necessarily mean, however, that all of our members are full-time professional photographers. Some pay the bills from other full time or part time jobs. However all accepted into the photography portion of the program possess a professional skill set in photography, lighting and editing techniques. Members who meet the application standards for our program are labeled as **NILMDTS Affiliated Photographers**. Those volunteers with leadership roles in their region additionally hold the title of **Area Coordinators**. We also enlist **Digital Retouch Artists** and **Parent Coordinators**. Additionally, our web site allows us to highlight which members have the following titles or certifications: **NILMDTS Certified Trainer**, **Completed Formal NILMDTS Training**, and/or **Hable Espanol**.

The Basics: Key Steps to Success

Below are a few recommended key steps to make your partnership with NILMDTS rewarding to both the families we serve, and you.

Attend a Regional Training where a certified instructor will go through a variety of steps and processes on how to make your volunteering with NILMDTS a successful partnership. Seminars performed by NILMDTS Certified Trainers are held regularly with locations and dates announced on our Web site under the PHOTOGRAPHERS page.

Contact your Area Coordinator and ask to shadow an upcoming session. We want you to start successfully as a NILMDTS volunteer and be properly trained before performing your first solo session. For an up-to-date listing of those active in your area, do a search as though you were a hospital or family looking for a photographer. Just go to our home page, www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org, and click on "Find a Photographer" and enter your zip code to locate the nearest person in your region. If, by chance, you are in a remote area and we do not yet have an Area Coordinator in your location, seek out guidance from this manual as well as from other NILMDTS photographers on the Forum.

Prepare a NILMDTS "kit" which should include updated copies of the **consent forms** and **NILMDTS business cards** in order for the family to be able to contact you. Consent forms are an essential document providing you with contact information for the family. The form also serves as a legal release allowing you to provide this service. We provide a template on the Forum for you to make "NILMDTS Business Cards" as they are more appropriate to hand a grieving family than one showcasing your studio.

Get to know the Forum at www.nowisleep.com where you will find plenty of resources. The Forum is a separate Web site from our main www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org site that requires you to register the first time you sign on. (*You can find more details on the Forum in Chapter 9 in the training manual*)

Prepare yourself for the emotions involved as you walk into the hospital room and introduce yourself to grieving parents. Keep in the back of your mind the knowledge that you are now able to provide portraiture that, within a few short days or weeks, will provide them precious images of their child to last forever.

Secure a partnership with a nurse as you enter each session, letting them know you may need help with the placement of the baby or other assistance.

In your formal goodbye, make sure you have your copy of their consent form in a safe place so you will be able to easily find the family's contact information when you are ready to send them their gift. Glance over the form, make sure it is legible. Provide the family a realistic expectation of when and what materials they will receive from you and make sure they have contact information for you (business card, etc). This is the most frequent call we take at headquarters, families who say their photographer told them they would "get the pictures soon" and after a few weeks, they still have not received the photos, nor have they received any correspondence from their photographer. We always remind the parents that this is a volunteer service and they should expect a maximum turnaround time of **6-8 weeks**, however we ask that you respectfully stay in touch throughout that time frame as you hold in your hands a most treasured gift.

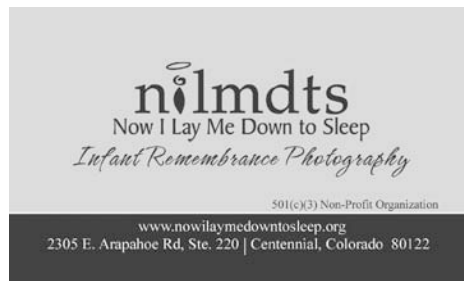
Most "Frequently Asked Questions" Among New Members

By the time you have received this training guide, you likely have completed all of the "first steps" involved in becoming active. Below, however, are answers to additional frequently asked questions (FAQ):

*** Q: I am happy to volunteer my services, however I am unable to make the \$25.01 annual donation.** A: We certainly thank the many members who assist NILMDTS by paying the annual donation, however we understand not everyone is able to pay the fee. The membership donation fee helps pay in part for the following:

- Maintenance of the Photographer and Family Forums. Many of you visit the Forum regularly and have received a great amount of good advice and support from your fellow photographers
- To maintain our website and the web based photographer database
- To offset the cost of mailing brochures, lanyards and other materials when you request them
- To ensure we have the manpower available in our offices to respond quickly and accurately to your needs
- To aid in the recruitment of other photographers who would like to be a part of NILMDTS
- To help with the publication and distribution of our training manual

If you are not able to pay the fee, we simply ask that you send an e-mail with the subject line WAIVER REQUEST to headquarters@nilmdts.org with your name and NILMDTS account #.



NILMDTS Business Card Sample (Not Actual Size). Available for download from the Forum at www.nowisleep.com



*** Q: I've signed up and paid my annual membership donation fee, now what? What is expected of me and who tells hospitals in my area that I am now on the network and available if the need arises?** A: Once approved for membership, we ask that you sign and fax back the "Volunteer Services Agreement" (VSA), a legal document which has you acknowledge that you understand the basic requirements and the Code of Conduct that we require you to adhere to as a representative of the program. *(For more information on the VSA, please see Chapter 10 in the training manual).* Once we receive your signed contract, we upload your contact information to the Web site and you become "active," allowing hospitals, families and Area Coordinators to find your contact information when the need arises. But being on the photographer list does not ensure that you will be contacted, if the area hospitals do not know about NILMDTS. It is our members that initiate those discussions in the hospitals to introduce the organization to hospital administration and nursing staff. The best place to start is to determine whether there is an Area Coordinator in your location. If there is, contact that person to find out what hospitals have worked with NILMDTS in your area.

*** Q: How will I know when services are needed, and what if I have a paying client or a family obligation and I have to say no?**

A: You will either receive a phone call or an e-mail from the hospital, the family, or your Area Coordinator requesting services. Even if you are unavailable, we would still appreciate a reply. While some session requests are emergent, others can be flexible with either a delay of an end-of-life procedure or a preservation of the child. If you are contacted and available at a later time in the day, please let the Area Coordinator, hospital or family know. Instead of having to say "no photographer is available right this moment," we might say, "we have a photographer that will be available at (tba) time." **Note: For other options, see "Options if you are Unavailable to Provide Services" on page 33.*

*** Q: How do I get brochures to spread the word to my area hospitals, and how much does that cost?** A: Before ordering brochures, please ensure that other area photographers have not yet provided them to the hospitals. Unless there is not an Area Coordinator in your region, we request that only Area Coordinators order brochures directly from Marathon Press. Area Coordinators can find updated instructions on how to order brochures on the Forum.

If you are an Area Coordinator and you would like customized brochures, we highly recommend customizing the state or regional information but not necessarily putting individual phone numbers on the brochures. At times, photographers have to take "breaks" from their service to NILMDTS for health or personal reasons. Keep in mind that if your phone number is on those brochures and you then need a break, they may still call you as it is nearly impossible to round-up all of the pamphlets once they are distributed. Also, in some regions, Area Coordinators rotate "who" takes the calls alleviating the burden of one person having to always take the requests. To meet the needs of all involved and the varying circumstances and challenges with printing individual phone numbers, we recommend putting customized wording for your region, such as, "TO FIND A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER WHO MAY BE ABLE TO VOLUNTEER NILMDTS SERVICES, PLEASE GO TO WWW.NOWILAYMEDOWNTOSLEEP.ORG AND CLICK ON 'FIND A PHOTOGRAPHER'". This technique has worked well in many regions. Eventually, our long-range plan is to have more of an "800" number central dispatch system in place; however the reality of such a system worldwide is many years and thousands of dollars away.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, we sincerely owe Marathon Press a huge thank you for their free-of-charge printing of these brochures over the years. The only cost incurred to NILMDTS headquarters or photographers is that of local imprinting and shipping. For pricing information on customized brochures or to have 10 "generic" brochures sent to you at a cost included in your membership dues, e-mail headquarters@nilmdts.org with "BROCHURE REQUEST" in the subject line. We generally are able to get these back to you within a few days.

*** Q: What is an Area Coordinator and how can I volunteer to become the Area Coordinator for the hospitals near me?** A: An Area Coordinator is a volunteer photographer that has agreed to serve as the primary contact for the hospital(s) in their area, to provide brochures and educational in-services to nursing staff, and to be the team leader for the photographers serving that area. On the “Find a Photographer” search engine at www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org, their name comes up in RED at the top of the page with clear instructions for the person searching to call that individual. An Area Coordinator can be specific for a geographical region or can be the Area Coordinator for just one or more specific hospitals. **Note: To volunteer to become an Area Coordinator, see full details in Chapter 12.*

*** Q: Do we receive calls from hospitals where we are informed that the early fetal demise is due to a pregnancy termination?** A: This question is often posted to Co-Founder Sandy Puc’ who states, “My personal opinion: Unless you walk a mile in those parent’s shoes, you should not judge them for their choices... The fact that they are calling us, to me, means that they must love this child and truly want images to remember him or her by. Each photographer must make their own decisions and follow their heart when dealing with this matter.” As a non-profit organization, NILMDTS does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sexuality, or personal choice. This information is confidential patient information and covered under HIPAA regulations that healthcare providers and institutions are obligated to abide by. This question should not be asked of the nurse or healthcare worker calling to request the service. However, you may be inadvertently told unsolicited confidential health information - please use discretion.