Dog Meets World

By Elaine Clayton

Poolesville Day, homecoming, birthdays, graduation, what do each of these events have in common? Most Americans have documented at least one of these important days through photographs. A picture captures a moment in time and takes us there again and again, creating and preserving memories of special people and places. Cameras and photographs have become ubiquitous in our daily lives. We have instant access with digital cameras, cell phones, and iPods. In a world where we can share those photos in an instant through email and Facebook, it is easy to forget that many people around the world do not have the seemingly simple luxury of a photograph and do not have an opportunity to document special events or take a picture of a treasured loved one.

This is where Dog Meets World (DMW), the nonprofit for which I am interning, comes into focus. Dog Meets World founder Carolyn Lane recognized that millions of people all over the world do not have access to photographs. Her innovative project aims to change that. The mission of DMW is to give children/families in developing countries personal photographs, often for the first time. Dog Meets World is a photo diplomacy project that seeks to change the way people see others, and rather than simply taking pictures while on vacation, to give them as well.

The process is easy and affordable, and is a simple way to connect with those you would not have expected to otherwise. Merely take along a digital camera, a portable printer, and the stuffed Foto mascot dog to photograph children and practice Take & Give Photography, essentially ground level diplomacy and volunteerism for everyone. To date, Dog Meets World pho**dog**rapher volunteers have distributed more than five thousand photographs to those in need in nearly forty developing countries.

If you happen to be traveling now or in the future, or are just interested in learning more about it, check out www.dogmeetsworld.org to read testimonials, Foto’s blog, and the full story of how this idea of sharing smiles came about.

*“Life through the lens enhances each moment when one is a guest in an unfamiliar land.*

*This sensory instance bridges any gaps in verbal languages and embeds a memory in*

*photographer and subject alike.”* – Patrick Fleming, a Fulbright Scholar and pho**dog**rapaher in Cambodia in 2009