

Say cheese! Families commemorate their isolation with "porchraits"

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Image 1. Canadian photographer Erik McRitchie says families have used humor in their "porchraits," in this case hooking rolls of toilet paper around their wrists. Photo: Erik McRitchie

Things have changed for families in the time of coronavirus.

The coronavirus is an illness like the flu. It began in December 2019 in China and has spread around the world. People have been staying home to slow the spread of the illness.

Family photos are changing because of it.

In some photos, family members look over their fences. Only their eyes show. Another family poses behind their front door. For one photo, each family member put a head out of a different window.

These photos are called "porchraits." They are popular in Canada. The photos are often taken on porches or outdoor steps. They show the separation that many are feeling. The photos also show families having fun together.

People Are Together In A Different Way

Erik McRitchie is a photographer in Canada. He said people are living through an unusual time. People are together in a different way, he said.

McRitchie has been busy. At the start of April he had done 25 photo shoots. He had 40 more to go.

Several photographers are taking photos like this in Canada. One took photos of people through their windows. Similar photos have been taken in the United States. The photos are also called "doorraits."

Many of the photos poke fun. One family sits on their porch with rolls of toilet paper. Even the dog gets one. Toilet paper has been hard to find in some places because people have bought a lot. Other families dress up in costumes or party clothes. They are taking a break from worries about the illness.

Other photos are more serious. They show how the illness has separated people.

Carol Payne is a professor of photography at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. "These are really interesting," she said. Many of the photos include windows or walls. In some, adults are separated from their elderly parents in nursing homes. The photos show how people got through together, she said.



Making A Hard Time Better

Many photographers, like McRitchie, are not making money from it. He tries to make a hard time better, he said.

Jon Neufeld's family was photographed in early April in Canada. It was the day they had planned to have their daughter's 5th birthday party. Instead, she dressed up in pink, and they ate birthday cake on the front steps. McRitchie was invited.

Neufeld said it is fun to see other photos online.

McRitchie said it is good to see people having fun. "It's reminding us of the strength we can find together."

Quiz

1 Read the section "People Are Together In A Different Way."

Select the detail from the section that explains that many people want their "porchraits" taken.

- (A) He said people are living through an unusual time. People are together in a different way, he said.
- (B) At the start of April he had done 25 photo shoots. He had 40 more to go.
- (C) Similar photos have been taken in the United States. The photos are also called "doorraits."
- (D) Other photos are more serious. They show how the illness has separated people.

2 Which question is answered in the section "Making A Hard Time Better"?

- (A) How many kids have had birthdays during the coronavirus?
- (B) How much money do photographers usually make?
- (C) How are McRitchie's photographs helping people?
- (D) How did Jon Neufeld's daughter feel about her picture?

3 Read the paragraph from the introduction [paragraphs 1-5].

In some photos, family members look over their fences. Only their eyes show. Another family poses behind their front door. For one photo, each family member put a head out of a different window.

What is the definition of "poses" based on the context clues?

- (A) looks for a place to hide
- (B) pretends to be someone else
- (C) works quietly to learn things
- (D) stands or sits still for a picture

4 Read the selection from the section "People Are Together In A Different Way."

Many of the photos poke fun. One family sits on their porch with rolls of toilet paper. Even the dog gets one. Toilet paper has been hard to find in some places because people have bought a lot.

What does the phrase "poke fun" mean?

- (A) make a joke
- (B) act very sad
- (C) move around
- (D) ask questions