

At-risk Tucson children take part in photo project

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Tucson children who are homeless or at risk will snap photos that capture their hopes and dreams as part of a photography project created by an award-winning photographer.

The Pictures of Hope program was started by Tucsonan **Linda Solomon**, a photojournalist who's covered the Academy Awards for many years, as a way to empower kids and encourage them to express their feelings through photography.

Pictures of Hope, which started in 2006, is offered in 13 cities annually. This is the third year in a row that Tucson children have been chosen to participate.

The kids range in age from 7 to 12 and are part of housing programs offered by New Beginnings, the homeless-services division of Our Family Services.

The project helps boost kids' self-esteem by showing that they are valued, Solomon said.

"If you can show the children that their dreams matter, it's life-changing," she said.

Solomon will give the children photo lessons Wednesday, when they will be given digital cameras donated by the local sponsor, O'Rielly Chevrolet. Tucson Mayor **Jonathan Rothschild** and others will help mentor the children through their photo assignment.

In past years, participating children have expressed their dreams of owning their own homes and helping kids with cancer.

One 11-year-old participant in last year's project in Tucson snapped a photo of a fruit strand to show his hope for his younger sister to grow up healthy.

The most common dream among the children is to go to college, Solomon said.

Kids frequently photograph the University of Arizona or books or sweat shirts with college logos to illustrate their dreams.

The photos will be turned into holiday greeting cards sold by Our Family Services. All proceeds will go to the organization. O'Rielly Chevrolet will host a reception unveiling the photos in November.