

BLESSED WITH AN EXTRA CHROMOSOME

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ABSTRACT

“Blessed with an Extra Chromosome” is a photo story that documents the lives of people with Trisomy 21, or Down Syndrome. Having an extra chromosome affects them in some certain aspects, but also provides them some benefits compared to their typically developed peers.

People who have Down Syndrome face many challenges starting at the fetal stage, due to early termination, lack of proper support, and discrimination from employment due to the fear of their intellectual ability not being on par with a “normal” person. This project aims to highlight the lives of people who have Down Syndrome and show that they are normal human beings, celebrating lives in their unique ways.

SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL ANALYSIS

Three photographers who have encountered or dedicated their work to cover people with Down Syndrome were interviewed with in-depth, semi-structured interviews to explore their experience. The photographers were chosen based on the length of their work, ranging from a capstone class project (Amy Kontras), an unexpected encounter (Taylor Baucom) to a long term, dedicated work with the Waterloo Regional Down Syndrome Society (Hilary Camillery). All photographers were asked about the cause and motivation that helped them make their decisions, their experience during the projects and their outcomes. The photographers were also interviewed about their approaches to cover the stories in order to provide a holistic view of how people with disabilities are portrayed.