

Special Image Collections

Stock photography business models keep changing as fast as the modern economy swings like a pendulum. It's a challenge to know what imagery to shoot and what will sell. Attempts to form a long term strategy are valid for about six months, when production and distribution systems have to be reassessed all over again. Image producers struggle with whether to create work that is appropriate for rights managed, royalty free, microstock, subscriptions or high value stock. Even the issue of image quality isn't always the biggest selling point.

One of the best ways to ride this wave has always been to cultivate a niche image specialty that sets the work apart from the crowd. The niche can be attributed to unique style, special location, challenging access or unusual lifestyle. Mark and Pat Hunt own the royalty free production company, Huntstock. They continue to pursue a special image collection which not only offers the opportunity to create quality work, but opens doors to new friendships and inspirations. They specialize in the positive lifestyle of people with disabilities.

Physical or mental challenges no longer need to inhibit a normal lifestyle. Today we enjoy everything from accessible streets, buildings and national parks, to special schools and training, along with better job opportunities. Young people are especially inspirational, and possess a renewed energy to learn, create and offer benefits to society. This aptly describes Mikie, a young man with Down Syndrome, who loves to be in front of the camera and perform. One of the first things anyone notices about Mikie is his warm personality and smiling friendly face. It glows with a handsomeness that makes friends easily.

Down Syndrome is a chromosomal disorder characterized by developmental disabilities. These disabilities have in no way stopped Mikie from graduating as a senior from a special needs school, and holding responsible jobs in everything from school maintenance, to restaurant cafes. At age 23, Mikie enjoys a very active lifestyle involved in an educational program known as *Life Choices*. There are a host of wonderful activities in which to participate, from health and wellness learning, to cooking, jewelry making, exercise, and museum visits. Most impressive of all is Mikie's natural sports abilities. Aside from being an award winning bowler, he is known for his basketball and soccer skills, stemming from his Special Olympics training in earlier years. He even excels at miniature golf. He has better skills at courting girls than many guys and always carries a picture of his girlfriend in his wallet. Mikie has been a very special inspiration when working with Huntstock.

Another unique family is that of a cute and clever four year old named Owen. Owen is an expert at American Sign Language. His father is deaf and his mother teaches sign language in special education. Working within this family dynamics has brought Owen a

brilliance way beyond his years. He has an enduring patience on camera and a never ending ability to take direction. He seamlessly converses with his family while signing to his Dad and playing with his five month old brother, Drew. Even Drew is signing back in response to love and attention. The family is close and supportive, playing games, using the computer and doing activities. Dad is active in working and raising the kids, giving the family communication skills that most families will never possess. This family, too, offers inspiration.

These images are part of a partner collection that is building at GettyImages.com. Getty Images is also building in uniqueness by offering new and unique image collections that can't be found in microstock venues. Their high production value imagery sets them apart from most distributors and offers the imagery around the globe in many different languages. Be prepared to identify your niche in order to stand out in an age of volume offerings and crowd sourcing.

(Pat Hunt is a writer and workshop leader for the stock photo industry, and Managing Director of *Huntstock.com* in Boston, a Royalty Free lifestyle production company. pat@huntstock.com. All images are courtesy of © Mark Hunt of Huntstock, mark@huntstock.com. All images are represented by GettyImages.com)

SIDEBAR:

Image subjects available in Huntstock Special Collections, www.huntstock.com:

Disabilities:

Cerebral Palsy

Muscular Dystrophy

Spinal injuries

Blindness

Deafness

Arthritis and bone density

Cardiac arrest

Blood pressure

Polio

Deformity

Veteran's issues

Accessible racing

Accessible sailing

Accessible cycling

Accessible bowling

Wheelchair tennis

Wheelchair basketball

Asthma

Down Syndrome

Industry:

Cryogenics and stem cell research

Laboratory testing

Manufacturing

Microchip processing

Control rooms

Water treatment facilities

Construction

Utility workers/lineman for phone, cable

Science labs

Asphalt plant

Lifestyle:

Hispanic culture

Seniors

PULL QUOTES:

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