



## Behind the Camera— Charlotte Geary

Contributor: Stacia Datskovska

Charlotte Geary, local photographer, walks into Lake Anne Coffee House with a swing in her step. The two cameras slung around her neck seem light as air. I am eager to learn more about the life of a professional photographer, and Charlotte's standpoint on her work, life, connection to people and nature, and purpose.

Charlotte's business started in 2001, but she has been a photographer all her life. She began taking photos when instant cameras were a necessity rather than an accessory, and darkrooms were the epitome of photography.

"Throughout the years, I've gotten a deeper appreciation of light and better anticipation of human behavior," Charlotte answers when I ask about how her work progressed and transformed. Charlotte shoots many types of photos from intimate family sessions to large commercial assignments. Her full work schedule is an indication of her talent, as well as the value she puts into nurturing relationships.

In terms of location, Reston is Charlotte's muse. Lake Anne fulfilled her desire to find a walkable place where people know each other and enjoy the bonds of a tight-knit community. Moreover, a place like Reston, with its vibrant nature, myriad of events, and bustling populace perfectly complement Charlotte's people-centered career and art.

To demonstrate her method, Charlotte gestures to the buzzing crowd around us on Lake Anne Plaza that is anticipating one of Reston's many summer concerts in breezy, better-than-perfect weather.

"When taking a photo, I try to predict when someone is going to burst out in laughter, or touch their neighbor, or show other emotion, and only through that can individual personality shine in a photo." Her eyes spark, and I know Charlotte has already caught a precious moment shot.

Throughout the interview, it strikes me how humble Charlotte is, how valuable her clients and their special moments are to her, even amidst the essentiality of her role as the master of her art and its product. In response to Ansel Adams' famous quote, "You don't take a photograph, you make it," Charlotte states otherwise: "I take a photograph. I preserve it. I observe the world around me and document it as genuinely as I can." This philosophy is evident in Charlotte's delicate approach to her works, some of them featuring life's most intimate and pure moments.

As I wrap up our interview, I ask Charlotte two final questions: "What is it you want to highlight with your photography? What is your ultimate overarching message?" Her answer is equal parts heart-warming and breathtaking.

Charlotte answers, getting emotional, "I want to highlight people's real stories, real experiences, real moments, relationships... Each of these is a story worth telling. The human experience—highs, lows, mundane 'in-betweens'—are beautiful. I want to preserve them, share them. I want every person to feel recognized in these moments. I want them to know I see them, and I value them."

Charlotte truly puts spirit and meaning into the task of taking a photo. Then again, for Charlotte, it's not a task; it's her life's purpose.

[www.charlottegeary.com](http://www.charlottegeary.com)



*Stacia Datskovska is a high school junior who is passionate about journalism, especially bringing awareness on happenings in the local area. She hopes to one day be a foreign correspondent, covering the world's most pressing issues.*